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MARXISM NATIONALITY AND WAR

A TEXT-BOOK IN TWO PARTS

EDITED BY
DONA TORR

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NOTE TO THE READER

At the end of each quotation used in this book, reference is made to the work from which the quotation is taken. The reader is asked, however, to note the following abbreviations:

LENIN: *C.W.* means *Collected Works*; *S.W.* means *Selected Works*; and *L.L.* the *Little Lenin Library*.

STALIN: wherever reference is made to *op. cit.* this refers to *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*.

Where a work is available in more than one edition, as, for instance, in Lenin's *Selected Works* and the *Little Lenin Library*, both references are given, though the text is always that of the former. Thus—

LENIN: *S.W.*, VII, p. 176; *L.L.*, 18, p. 65

means that the passage quoted can be found in the *Selected Works*, Volume VII, page 176, and in *The Little Lenin Library*, Number 18, page 65.

A list of the chief works from which quotations have been made will be found on p. 7.

I

INTRODUCTION

“War is the continuation of politics by other means.”

(LENIN: *L.L.*, 2, p. 18; *S.W.*, V, p. 180.)

War comes upon us first as a catastrophe. We look for a cause beyond blind fate or old “human nature,” and find some lawless, insatiable tyrant, who, it seems, must be destroyed before we can live in peace: Napoleon—“Boney,” Kaiser Bill or Hitler. We are victims, forced to defend ourselves, we have had nothing to do with it. It is always the fault of the foreigner.

Science, however, shows that first appearances do not take us far enough. “War,” wrote Lenin, “is not an accident, not a ‘sin’ . . .” (p. 117).

“The social and political character of the war is determined not by the ‘good intentions’ of individuals or groups, or even of peoples, but by the position of the *class* which conducts the war, by the class *policy* of which the war is a continuation, by the *ties* of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society by the imperialist character of international capital.”¹

“‘I don’t want annexations, but the German is after me; therefore I am defending a just cause and not imperialist interests.’ It must be explained very patiently to a man like this that it is not a question of

¹ Lenin, *S.W.*, VI, p. 53. Lenin wrote these and the following words after the Revolution, when he insisted that the war must be ended, though the Germans were invading parts of Russia.

his personal wishes, but of mass, *class*, political relations and conditions, of the connection between the war and the interests of capital. . . .”¹

The present small volume of quotations, with its companion, Part Two, is intended to illustrate the relations between class struggle and war, and to be used as an elementary introduction to the Marxist science of history, in some of its dealings with war and peace. Incomplete as the book is, it will have served its purpose if the reader, turning from it to the endless sources of power awaiting him in the writings themselves, begins to see his own place as a maker of history. For Marxist science, always in the making, less than a century old, born with *The Communist Manifesto* and the year of wars and revolutions, 1848, is concerned not only with the understanding of past and present, but with the creation of the future; its aim is to know the world and to change it. Conceived when man was gaining undreamt-of triumphs over the forces of Nature, it points to that new era of civilisation in which, by assuming conscious, collective control over his own production and social order, he will abandon the blind war of every man against every man, and leave “the conditions of animal existence behind him.”²

History, the record of man’s creative struggle for freedom, has entered a higher heroic age since the war and Revolution of 1917 in Russia opened for one-sixth of the world the way to Socialism. During the last twenty-three years, scarcely a country on earth has escaped the gathering conflict between the forces of the old world and the new. But rising conflict between old and new social

¹ Lenin, *S.W.*, VI, p. 54.

² Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 318.

forces has always marked those revolutionary epochs when, by a "leap" like the "ten days that shook the world" in 1917, man, in supreme struggle, may extend his control over the conditions of life.

"We must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the dominant force."¹

It is this distinction that illuminates the terms and categories of history—epochs, the character of progressive wars, the relations between nations, between class struggle and war or between war and peace—and gives the guiding line of action to the class that holds the future in its hands. This is our primary clue.

* * * * *

Second, we note the relation between the social order and the development of production, the antagonism between an old social order and new productive forces imprisoned by it. Behind the change from a feudal society, based on ownership of land by territorial lords, to a bourgeois society, based on ownership of capital by masters of commerce or industry, or from absolute monarchy to some stage of parliamentary government and bourgeois democracy, lie changes in the methods by which men secure the means of life. To break the monopolies of the great landowners and the Church, to gain freedom for trade, communications, organisation,

¹ Stalin, *History of the C.P.S.U.[B]*, p. 110.

ideas—the *equal rights* of individual producers or distributors, of property-owners—was the object of the revolutionary wars of the rising bourgeoisie in different centuries and phases.¹ Such wars were progressive if by *destroying monopolies* they increased the resources of civilisation and gave wider potentialities of development and self-government—democracy—to greater numbers of people. The, bourgeois-revolutionary or nationalist wars of the nineteenth century in Europe accompanied the development of large-scale machine industry and new systems of communication: small, scattered units of individual production became huge organisations of social production and subdivided labour (factories); the world market was in operation and productivity had multiplied until, in 1878, Engels could declare that:

“The possibility of securing for every member of society, through social production, an existence which is not only fully sufficient from a material standpoint and becoming richer from day to day, but also guarantees to them the completely unrestricted development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility now exists for the first time, but it *does exist*.”²

That vast increase of wealth had been won under the banner of freedom, chiefly by British capitalists, but each advance brought with it new barriers. To-day,

¹ E.g. in the stage of rising merchant capitalism: the religious wars (sixteenth century); the English Civil War (seventeenth century); the great American War of Independence (eighteenth century). In the stage of rising industrial capitalism, the American Civil War, 1861–4. For the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars see p. 22, and Part Two.

² Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 317.

productivity has again increased by the hundred-fold, yet half Britain's population and a growing majority of the world's population lack nourishment. Great expansive forces remain fettered by private monopolies, the planned labour-process is enslaved to the anarchy of competition; "the necessity for the means of production and subsistence to take on the form of capital stands like a ghost between them and the workers . . . it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and to live."¹ This "necessity" brings about the great *crises* of capitalism which lie behind modern wars (pp. 63-72).

The declaration of Engels that Socialism could now advance from utopia to reality was made during the long *crisis of a new kind* (1873-87) which marked for Britain the challenge of new competitors: Germany, unified by the wars of 1866 and 1871 (Part Two); and the U.S.A., where, in the Civil War of 1861-4, the industrial North and bourgeois democracy had triumphed. Until this turning-point of the 'seventies, both in Britain and other West European countries, the industrial bourgeoisie—successive sections of rising "middle" classes—could justly claim victories for freedom, material and political (extended franchise, removal of civil, social and religious disabilities, etc., gained in alliance with the rising working class).² Yet the very mainspring of their power—machine industry, capitalist accumulation, wholesale expropriation of small producers—which, from the first, had made them ruthless exploiters, had all the while

¹ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 311.

² In Britain the culminating point was 1866-75, when the workers first won the franchise, "freedom of contract" and legal status for trade unions. They achieved this not on an independent class basis, but as the Radical wing of the Liberal Party.

been transforming middle-class "free traders" into ruling-class monopolists, and developing their "grave-digger," the proletariat. Marx's *Capital* (1867), a scientific analysis of the economic laws of social movement and a satire on the "freedom and equality" of nineteenth-century Liberalism, showed how the "equal" right to property-owning, one of the revolutionary Rights of Man in 1789,¹ had become the right to monopolise the means of production and to exploit wage labour. By 1900 the competition of individual capitalists had become the competition of combines, monopolies and billionaires, and a handful of Great Powers had divided up the world between them.

In his writings on the first World War, 1914-18, Lenin first analysed and defined this *changed character* of capitalism, showing why the division of spoils (colonies, markets) cannot remain stable and peaceful (p. 79), why economic crises must become intensified and increase the drive to war (p. 76), why wars led by monopoly capitalists cannot be wars for liberty and the progress of civilisation, and why the epoch of imperialism is also the epoch of *proletarian revolution*.

JJ "Capitalism, formerly a liberator of nations, has now, in its imperialist stage, become the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, it has become a reactionary force. It has developed the productive forces to such an extent that humanity must either pass over to Socialism, or for years, nay decades, witness armed conflicts of the 'great' nations for an artificial maintenance of capitalism by means

¹ Revolutionary in face of the feudal system, which was based on the land monopolies of great lords.

of colonies, monopolies, privileges, and all sorts of national oppression.”¹

We have reached our third clue—the *class* which to-day bears responsibility for the advance of human civilisation. Only the working class is “a truly revolutionary class,” because it alone can accomplish a revolution which will be more than a transference of power from one exploiting minority to another. Socialist revolution leaves no field for profitable compromise between old and new classes of exploiters; this conflict makes higher demands and meets fiercest resistance.

Crushing defeats marked the early struggles of the revolutionary proletariat; the new forms of organisation and unity were won by unending heroism. The period of development when the workers first began to “grow strong *within* the nation” opened with Chartist failure and the June days of 1848 in France,² when the earliest cry of proletarian dictatorship was drowned in blood; it closed with the two months’ dictatorship of the Paris Commune in 1871,³ for which 30,000 men and women gave their lives.

Throughout that period, 1848–71, it was not yet possible to speak of utilising a war situation for the overthrow of capitalism. Conditions were not ripe for *Socialist* revolution; “there were no Socialist parties of any strength, mass appeal, and proven in battle” in any belligerent country. Marx and the Marxists could only decide “*which* bourgeoisie’s victory would be more harmless to (or more favourable for) the world proletariat at a time when it was impossible to think of a

¹ Lenin, *L.L.*, 3, p. 11.

² Part Two, I.

³ Part Two, IV (4).

general proletarian movement against the governments and the bourgeoisie in all the belligerent countries" (p. 27). But the first resolution defining the tasks of an *international* organisation of the working class in a contemporary war (1866)¹ declared the *separate* interests of the workers and the paramount importance of struggle against the class enemy at home. The first fraternal greetings between organised proletarians of belligerent countries followed in 1871.² And with 1871 and the Franco-Prussian War a new era was opening. Outside the gates of Paris the French bourgeoisie had joined hands with the German invaders for defence against the revolutionary workers. The Peace Treaty was not a month old when French troops began bombarding the Paris of the Commune and the first proletarian dictatorship.

"Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a *national* uniform; the *national* governments are *one* against the proletariat!" (p. 42).

The great turning-point to our own age had begun; the forces of international capital were rising; for Britain and the industrially developed countries of Western Europe the long epoch of bourgeois-democratic revolution closed; with the crisis of 1873-87, the Social-Democratic parties were born. In 1887, Engels foretold a new kind of war, the only war now possible for "Prussia-Germany," a *world war* where soldiers would be set to massacre one another by the million, a war which

¹ Resolution of the International Workingmen's Association on the Austro-Prussian War. See Part Two, IV (3), and for the character of earlier internationalist development, Part Two, II (3).

² See Part Two, IV (4).

would devour "old Europe," but from which a victory of the proletariat would emerge.¹

As the first World War approached, the European Socialists unitedly resolved (1907, 1912) that their main task in this war must be to "hasten the downfall of capitalism" (p. 90). But in 1914-18 only one Socialist Party carried out the resolutions of the Second International: the Bolsheviks achieved victory for the working class; "the reserves of the West" failed.

Lenin pointed out two causes of this failure. First, that in all imperialist "oppressor" countries (p. 37) there existed within the working class *petty bourgeois* sections (developed earliest in the oldest capitalist country, Britain) which are wedded to capitalism by "superior" conditions—privileges or offices derived from monopoly and colonial plunder (p. 38). As working-class leaders, they act as agents of the ruling class, valued for their double position. To-day they are already superseded in fascist countries; in Britain and France they are key men in the state machine and the most determined enemies of revolution.

The second cause of defeat was the "deception of the people by the slogans of equality and freedom": the "equal rights" of "capital" and "labour," of exploiter and exploited within the "nation," of oppressor and oppressed within the Empire. To-day, when the peoples are being summoned to fight for freedom, already in France a great political party has been suppressed, its press forbidden, its parliamentary representatives robbed of their rights and imprisoned. The official leaders of the British working class, who, in the name of freedom,

¹ Marx-Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 456. For Lenin's comments on these great "prophetic words," see *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, p. 188.

support British Imperialism and are the bitterest foes of the only Socialist country in the world, make no protest.

“Rhetoric about economic liberty of all nations great and small is disgusting hypocrisy as long as *certain* nations (for example, England and France) invest abroad, i.e. lend at usurious interest to small and backward nations scores and scores of billions of francs, and as long as the small nations are in bondage to them.”¹

“At the moment when things have gone as far as the overthrow of the power of capital . . . even in one country . . . at such an historical moment when the struggle of the oppressed toiling classes for the complete overthrow of capital . . . is coming to the front, we say that everybody who at such a political moment makes use of the words ‘freedom in general,’ who in the name of this freedom acts against the dictatorship of the proletariat,² is helping the exploiters and nothing else. He is their ally, because freedom, unless it is subordinated to the interests of the emancipation of labour from the yoke of capital, is a fraud.”³

The same forces which produced the first Imperialist War and the betrayal of the working class are active to-day. But other things are not the same. All the world is no longer divided up between oppressor Powers: one-sixth of it has been withdrawn from the system that

¹ Lenin, *S.W.*, V, p. 259.

² “Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists . . . A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of class struggle to the acceptance of the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Lenin, *L.L.*, 14, p. 28; *S.W.*, VII, p. 33. Marx-Engels *Selected Correspondence*, p. 57.

³ Lenin, “The Deception of the People,” *L.L.*, p. 21.

makes war; in one-sixth of the world the workers and peasants have already taken the future into their own hands. The revolutionary "reserves of the West" no longer consist of a few brave, isolated individuals; the Communist International has grown up; in France and Germany great Parties are taking the place held by the Bolsheviks in 1914. Rulers can no longer rule in the old "peaceful" way. And vast new forces have arisen. Millions who stood outside history have become makers of history; the "reserves of the East," helpless instruments of the last war, have taken the field. In China, revolutionary workers and peasants lead anti-imperialist war. India, where, as this is written, thousands of anti-imperialists are jailed, has set the first example of mass opposition to the slaughter.

To-day, youth in all the wealth of its new life and promise is sent to slay youth. This is our freedom. One class only can end imperialist war and imperialist peace and make the future worthy of man:

"The task to which I have devoted my life is to elevate another class—the working class. That task is, not to strengthen any national state, but to strengthen a Socialist state—and that means an international State."¹

• The purpose of the present text-book is to show reasons for following this example.

DONA TORR.

¹ Stalin, interview with Emil Ludwig, 1932.

II

THE LIBERATION OF NATIONS

- (1) NATIONAL STATES. (2) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL AND COLONIAL MOVEMENTS. (3) OPPRESSOR NATIONS. (4) NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL (POLAND). (5) SMALL NATIONS OR SOVIET REPUBLICS.

(1) NATIONAL STATES

[National states are generally formed through wars; they are the characteristic expression of capitalist development. In most of Western Europe, capitalism, in its various progressive struggles against feudal-territorial lords and absolutism achieved national unification or national independence between the early sixteenth and the last quarter of the nineteenth centuries.¹ Nationalism begins as the expression of bourgeois-revolutionary struggle and advance; successful struggles of this kind involve *extensions of democracy*. Independent, nationally unified states are the normal form of capitalist state.

National wars and *national movements* are those which aim at *political* independence and the formation of *separate* national states. The *self-determination of nations* means, in the first place, their right to secession and the formation of separate states (p. 28). Further stages, pp. 50, 51.

Whether a *national war* is, on one side or the other, a progressive, revolutionary war or not depends upon the *class* content, the *social* character of the leading forces engaged. The reason why some national wars of the nineteenth century were progressive has been referred to in the Introduction and is explained in this section. Take any two European countries to-day and consider why a war between them in 1940 has a

¹ For Stalin's definition of a *nation*, see Stalin, "The National Question," 1913, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 8.

different class character from that of a war in 1848-71 (cf. Part Two). The most important difference is that the prerequisites of Socialism were then absent and are now present. See pp. 25, 27 for difference involved in Marxist tactics. For national wars in the epoch of imperialism, see p. 42.]

A new epoch in the history of mankind was opened by the great French Revolution. From that time down to the Paris Commune, i.e. from 1789 to 1871, some of the wars had a bourgeois-progressive character, being waged for national liberation. In other words, the main contents and the historic significance of those wars consisted in overthrowing absolutism and feudalism, at least in undermining those institutions, or in casting off the yoke of foreign nations. Therefore these wars can be considered progressive.

When such wars were waged, all honest revolutionary democrats as well as Socialists always sympathised with that side (i.e. with that bourgeoisie) which helped to overthrow or at least to undermine the most dangerous foundations of feudalism and absolutism, or to combat the oppression of foreign peoples. For instance, the fundamental historic significance of the revolutionary wars of France,¹ notwithstanding the tendency to plunder and conquer foreign lands on the part of the French, consists in the fact that they shook and destroyed feudalism and absolutism in the whole of the old Europe hitherto based on serf labour.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 219; *L.L.*, p. 9 (1915).

The usual division of historical epochs,² many times quoted in Marxist literature . . . is this:

(1) 1789 to 1871, (2) 1871 to 1914, (3) 1914-? Of course,

¹ The Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, 1789-1815. Part Two, I.

² Lenin in this article was concerned with the division into historical epochs as a guide to action; for his concrete illustrations from the Italian war of 1859, see Part Two, III.

the lines of demarcation, as always in Nature and society, are here conditional and mobile, relative, not absolute. We take the most outstanding and striking historic events only approximately, as milestones of great historic movements.

The First Epoch, from the great French Revolution to the Franco-Prussian War, is the epoch of the rise of the bourgeoisie, of its full victory. This is the ascending line of the bourgeoisie, the epoch of bourgeois-democratic movements in general, of bourgeois-national movements in particular, an epoch of a rapid breakdown of the obsolete feudal, absolutist institutions.

The Second Epoch is the epoch of the full domination and decline of the bourgeoisie, an epoch of transition from the progressive character of the bourgeoisie to reactionary, even rabidly reactionary, finance capital. In this epoch the forces of a new class of modern democracy are preparing and slowly gathering.

The Third Epoch, which is just beginning, places the bourgeoisie in the same "position" as that in which the feudal lords found themselves during the First Epoch. This is the epoch of imperialism and imperialist convulsions resulting from the nature of imperialism. . . .

The main objective contents of the historical phenomena of the wars, not only of 1855, 1859, 1864, 1870, but also of 1877 (the Russo-Turkish War)¹ and 1896 to 1897 (the war between Turkey and Greece and the Armenian uprising) were bourgeois national movements, convulsions of bourgeois society freeing itself from various aspects of feudalism. There could have been no thought at that time about a really independent action of *modern* democracy, which fits the epoch of over-ripeness and decay of the bourgeoisie in a number of the leading countries. The main class which then, during the wars and participating in the wars, moved on an ascending line, and which alone could march with overwhelming force against the feudal absolutist institutions was

¹ For these wars, see Part Two.

the bourgeoisie. In various countries, represented by various strata of *propertied* producers of commodities, this bourgeoisie was progressive in various degrees, sometimes, like part of the Italian bourgeoisie in 1859, even revolutionary.

The common feature of the epoch, however, was the progressivism of the bourgeoisie, i.e. its yet undecided unfinished struggle against feudalism. . . . The movement of the people in the main countries touched by the war was at that time generally democratic, i.e. bourgeois-democratic by its economic and class contents. It is quite obvious that *no other question* could have been raised at that time outside of the question: the success of which bourgeoisie, the success of which combination of forces, the failure of which reactionary forces (feudal absolutist forces hampering the rise of the bourgeoisie) promised more "elbow room" for modern democracy. . . .

The international conflicts in the Third Epoch have as far as the form is concerned remained the same international conflict as in the First Epoch, but their social contents, their class contents have fundamentally changed. The objective historical surroundings have become entirely different.

In place of the struggle of rising capital striving towards national liberation from the remnants of feudalism, there has come the struggle of the most reactionary finance capital against the new forces, the struggle of a power that has exhausted and outlived itself—that is, headed downward towards decay. The bourgeois national frame-work of states which in the First Epoch was a support to the *development* of the productive forces of humanity then in the process of liberating itself from feudalism, has now, in the Third Epoch, become a *hindrance* to the free development of the productive forces.

From a rising progressive class the bourgeoisie has become a sinking, decaying, internally dead, reactionary class. The rising class—on a wide international scale—has become an entirely different one. . . . The objective task in the first period was to find out how the progressive bourgeoisie should

utilise international conflicts in its struggle against the *chief* representative of dying feudalism, so that the world democratic bourgeoisie as a whole might obtain a maximum gain. . . . The number of such chief and central feudal fortresses of European importance was not at all large at that time. This is why Marx "evaluated" the conflicts, finding out in which country under given concrete circumstances, the success of the bourgeois movement for liberation was more *important* for the purpose of undermining the *all-European* feudal might.

Now, in the Third Epoch, there are no more feudal fortresses of a general European importance. Of course, it is the task of modern democracy too, to *utilise* "conflicts"; but this *international* utilisation must . . . be directed not against this or that national finance capital, but against international finance capital. The conflicts must be utilised not by that class which fifty to one hundred years ago was rising. At that time the order of the day was "international action" . . . of the most advanced bourgeois democracy; at present there has historically arisen and there has been advanced by the objective situation a similar task for another class.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, pp. 126-9 (1915).

✓ The categorical demand of Marxian theory in examining any social question is that it be placed within *definite* historical limits, and if it refers to one country (e.g. the national programme for a given country), that the concrete peculiarities that distinguish that country from others within the same political epoch be taken into account.

What does this categorical demand of Marxism signify when applied to our question?

First of all, it signifies the necessity of strictly distinguishing two epochs of capitalism radically differing from each other from the point of view of the national movement. On the one hand, the epoch of the downfall of feudalism and absolutism, the epoch of the formation of bourgeois democratic society

and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another *all* classes of the population are drawn into politics by means of the Press, participation in representative institutions, etc.

On the other hand, we have an epoch of definitely crystallised capitalist states with a long-established constitutional régime, with a strongly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—an epoch that may be called the eve of the downfall of capitalism.

The typical traits of the First Epoch are the awakening of the national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general and for national rights in particular.

The typical traits of the Second Epoch are the absence of mass bourgeois democratic movements, when developed capitalism, while more and more bringing together and interweaving the nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, puts in the forefront the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international labour movement.

Of course the two epochs are not separated from each other by a wall; they are connected by numerous transitional links, while the various countries are also distinguished by the rapidity of national development, by the national composition and distribution of the population, and so forth.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 255 (1914).

The sophism of these reasonings consists in substituting for the present epoch another long past historical epoch.

The main features of the old wars [of 1848–1871] . . . were these:

1. They solved the problem of bourgeois-democratic reforms and the overthrow of absolutism or foreign oppression.

2. Objective prerequisites for a socialist revolution were not yet ripe at that time and none of the Socialists *prior to the war* could speak of utilising wars "for hastening the collapse of capitalism" as did the Stuttgart (1907) and Basle (1912) resolutions.

3. There were no Socialist parties of any strength, with mass appeal, and proven in battle, in the countries of *either* of the belligerent groups. . . . Marx and the Marxists confined themselves to deciding *which* bourgeoisie's victory would be more harmless to or more favourable for the world proletariat at a time when it was impossible to think of a general proletarian movement against the governments and the bourgeoisie in all the belligerent countries.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 173 (1915).

A nation is not merely a historical category, but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism was at the same time a process of amalgamation of people into nations. Such, for instance, was the case in Western Europe. The British, French, Germans, Italians and others formed themselves into nations at the time of the victorious advance of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.¹

But the formation of nations in these instances at the same time signified their conversion into independent national

¹ Britain and France had become unified national states under absolute monarchs by the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the period of rising merchant capitalism and "primitive accumulation," when the king allied himself with the bourgeoisie to break the power of the great feudal lords (e.g. the new "national" pride of England under Henry VIII and Elizabeth reflected in Shakespeare's historical plays). Later the bourgeoisie overthrew the king (Britain, 1640-9; France, 1789-93) but bourgeois democracy was only (p. 16) attained in the nineteenth century (Part Two). Germany and Italy (Part Two) became unified national states in the nineteenth-century period of rising industrial capitalism and large-scale industry, when the *proletariat* was growing up and the struggle for national unification against absolute monarchy achieved bourgeois democracy. Stalin points out the feature common to them all: developing capitalism.

states. The British, French and other nations are at the same time British, French, etc., states. Ireland, which did not participate in this process, does not alter the general picture.¹

STALIN: *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 13 (1913).

Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism was linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language, while all obstacles to the development of this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed.

Language is the most important means of human intercourse; unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive commercial turnover corresponding to modern capitalism, of a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes; finally, they are a condition for the close connection between the market and each and every proprietor and petty proprietor, seller and buyer.

The formation of *national states*, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement. The deepest economic factors urge towards this goal, and for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the *typical*, normal state for the capitalist period is, therefore, the national state.

Consequently, if we want to understand the meaning of self-determination of nations without juggling with legal definitions, without "inventing" abstract definitions, but examining the historical and economic conditions of the national movements, we shall inevitably reach the conclusion

¹ Ireland, pp. 31, 34 n., 42.

that self-determination of nations means the political separation of these nations from other national bodies, the formation of an independent national state.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 250.

(2) DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL AND COLONIAL MOVEMENTS

[Stalin explains the difference in origin between the *national* West European and the *multi-national* East European states, and describes how national movements arise and how one nationality tends to dominate others (p. 30). In Western Europe national-revolutionary wars were for the most part concluded by the last quarter of the nineteenth century; in countries of Eastern Europe and Asia the first bourgeois-democratic revolutions take place in the twentieth century (p. 33). Hence, before the first World War, Lenin analysed the tasks of Socialists in relation to "three types of countries" (p. 33).

Stalin describes the three historic periods of the national question, the last being the Soviet period. Since the older unified capitalist states of Western Europe, now great imperialist Powers, have themselves become multi-national, oppressor states, the former distinction between "national" (i.e. European) and "colonial" struggles (made by the Second International and still maintained by British Labour Party leaders)¹ is a deception (p. 37). Five-sixths of the world

¹ "The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs and other nationalities in Europe made up the list of non-sovereign nations in whose fate the heroes of the Second International were interested. The countless millions of Asiatic and African peoples . . . suffering under the yoke of national oppression in its crudest and most brutal form, usually remained outside their field of visions. They could not make up their minds to put white and black 'cultured' and 'uncultured' on the same plane. . . . Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, Europeans and Asiatics 'cultured' and 'uncultured' slaves of imperialism and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies." (Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 190.)

is now divided up between oppressing and oppressed nations. In one-sixth, the U.S.S.R., national oppression has been overcome by a deliberate policy which is discussed in detail in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (Stalin).]

While in the West the nations developed into states, in the East, multi-national states were formed, each consisting of several nationalities. Such are Austria-Hungary and Russia. In Austria, the Germans proved to be politically the most developed, and they took it upon themselves to amalgamate the Austrian nationalities into a state. In Hungary, the most adapted for state organisation were the Magyars—the kernel of the Hungarian nationalities—and it was they who united Hungary. In Russia, the role of welder of nationalities was assumed by the Great Russians, who were headed by an aristocratic military bureaucracy, historically formed, powerful and well-organised.

Such was the case in the East.

This peculiar method of formation of states could take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated,¹ where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations.

But capitalism also began to develop in the Eastern states. Trade and means of communication were developing. Large towns were springing up. The nations were becoming economically consolidated. Capitalism, erupting into the tranquil life of the ousted nationalities, was arousing them and stirring them into action. The development of the Press and the theatre, the activity of the Reichsrat (Austria) and of the Duma (Russia) were helping to strengthen “national

¹ These states were formed mainly for needs of national defence against the invasions of the Turks, Mongols, etc., and partly by the survival of feudal relations (e.g. acquisition of lands by marriage in the case of the Austrian Empire). Cf. Stalin, *op. cit.*, pp. 88, 99, 270, etc.

sentiments." The intelligentsia that had arisen was being imbued with "the national idea" and was acting in the same direction. . . .

But the ousted nations, aroused to independent life, could no longer shape themselves into independent national states; they encountered the powerful resistance of the ruling strata of the dominant nations, which had long ago assumed the control of the state. They were too late!

In this way the Czechs, Poles, etc., formed themselves into nations in Austria; the Croats, etc., in Hungary; the Letts, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, etc., in Russia. What had been an exception in Western Europe (Ireland) became the rule in the East.

In the West, Ireland responded to its exceptional position by a national movement. In the East, the awakened nations were bound to respond in the same fashion.

Thus arose the circumstances which impelled the young nations of Eastern Europe into the path of struggle.

The struggle began and spread, to be sure, not between nations as a whole, but between the ruling classes of the dominant and the ousted nations. The struggle is usually conducted by the urban petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the big bourgeoisie of the dominant nation (Czechs and Germans), or by the rural bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the landlords of the dominant nation (Ukrainians in Poland), or by the whole "national" bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations against the ruling nobility of the dominant nation (Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine in Russia).

The bourgeoisie plays the leading role.

The chief problem for the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and to emerge victorious from competition with the bourgeoisie of another nationality. Hence its desire to secure its "own," its "home" market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism.

But matters are usually not confined to the market. The semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois bureaucracy of the dominant nation intervenes in the struggle with its own methods of "arresting and preventing." The bourgeoisie of the dominant nation, whether large or small, is able to deal more "rapidly" and "decisively" with its competitors. "Forces" are united and a series of restrictive measures is put into operation against the "alien" bourgeoisie, measures passing into acts of repression.

The struggle passes from the economic sphere to the political sphere. Limitation of freedom of movement, repression of language, limitation of franchise, restriction of schools, religious limitations, and so on are piled on to the head of the "competitor." Of course, such measures are designed, not only in the interests of the bourgeois classes of the dominant nation, but also in pursuit of the specifically caste aims, so to speak, of the ruling bureaucracy. But, from the point of view of the results achieved, this is quite immaterial: the bourgeois classes and the bureaucracy in this matter go hand in hand, whether it be in Austria-Hungary or in Russia.

The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand, is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its "native folk" and begins to cry out about the "fatherland," claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from its "countrymen" in the interests of . . . the "fatherland." Nor do the "folk" always remain unresponsive to its appeals; they rally around its banner: the repression from above affects them also and provokes their discontent.

Thus the national movement begins.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 13 (1913).

In Western continental Europe the period of bourgeois democratic revolutions embraces a fairly definite period of

time, approximately from 1789 to 1871.¹ It was this epoch that was the epoch of national movements and the creation of national states. After the termination of this period, Western Europe was transformed into a settled system of bourgeois states, and, as a general rule, single-nation states. . . .

In Eastern Europe and in Asia the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions only started in 1905.² The revolutions in Russia, Persia, Turkey, and China,³ the wars in the Balkans, such is the chain of world events of *our* period in our "Orient." And only the blind can fail to see the awakening of a *whole series* of bourgeois-democratic national movements, strivings to create nationally independent and nationally united states in this chain of events. It is precisely and solely because Russia and the neighbouring countries are passing through this epoch that we require an item in our programme on the right of nations to self-determination.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 260 (1914).

Three Types of Countries in Relation to Self-Determination of Nations. First, the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe and the United States of America. In these countries the bourgeois, progressive, national movements came to an

¹ Excluding Ireland and Spain. For Ireland, pp. 34n, 42.

² Lenin is here speaking of specific wars and revolutions. In India the bourgeois-nationalist movement took organised shape in 1885.

³ "The Chinese War (with Japan, 1894) has given the death-blow to the old China," wrote Engels to Sorge, November 10, 1894. "Isolation has become impossible, the introduction of railroads, steam-engines, electricity, large-scale industry, has already become necessary for purposes of military defence. But with this the old economic system of small peasant cultivation, where the family also makes its industrial products for itself, falls to pieces, too, and with it the whole of the old social system." The Manchu dynasty was overthrown and the first Chinese Republic set up in 1912. The leading forces in the struggle against feudalism, imperialism, and for national independence and democracy are now the Chinese proletariat and peasants.

end long ago. Every one of these "great" nations oppresses other nations in the colonies and within its own country. The tasks of the proletariat of these ruling nations are the same as those of the proletariat in England in the nineteenth century in relation to Ireland.¹

Secondly, Eastern Europe: Austria, the Balkans and particularly Russia. Here it was the twentieth century that particularly developed the bourgeois-democratic national movements and intensified the national struggle. The tasks of the proletariat in these countries—in regard to the consummation of their bourgeois-democratic reformation, as well as in regard to assisting the Socialist revolution in other countries—cannot be achieved unless it champions the right of nations to self-determination. In this connection, the most difficult but most important task is to merge the class struggle of the workers in the oppressing nations with the class struggle of the workers in the oppressed nations.

Thirdly, the semi-colonial countries, like China, Persia, Turkey and all colonies, which have a combined population amounting to a billion. In these countries the bourgeois-democratic movements have either hardly begun, or are far from having been completed. Socialists must not only demand the unconditional and immediate liberation of the colonies without compensation—and this demand in its political expression signifies nothing more nor less than the recognition of the right to self-determination—but they must render determined support to the more revolutionary elements in the bourgeois-democratic movements for national

¹ Cf. Lenin, *S.W.*, IV, p. 279: "In Great Britain the bourgeois revolution was completed long ago. But . . . in Ireland, it is being completed now [1914] after the lapse of half a century, by the reforms of the British Liberals. If capitalism in Great Britain had been overthrown as quickly as Marx first expected, there would have been no place for a bourgeois-democratic and general national movement in Ireland. But since it arose, Marx advises the British workers to support it, to give it a revolutionary impetus and lead it to a final issue in the interests of *their own* liberty."

liberation in these countries and assist their rebellion—and if need be, their revolutionary war—*against* the imperialist powers that oppress them.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 275 (1916).

Thus the *first period* is marked by the appearance of nationalities in the dawn of capitalism: in Western Europe we observe the birth of purely national states to which national oppression is unknown,¹ whereas in the East we observe the birth of multi-national states with one more developed nation at the head and the remaining, less developed, nations in a state of political, and later of economic subjection to the dominant nation. . . .

The *second period* in the development of national oppression and the methods of combating it coincides with the period which saw the appearance of imperialism; when capitalism, in its search for markets, raw materials, fuel and cheap labour power, and in the competition for the export of capital and the possession of the great rail and sea routes, breaks out of the confines of the national state and extends its territory at the expense of near and distant neighbours.

In this second period, the old national states in the West—Great Britain, Italy and France—cease to be national states; in other words, by virtue of the seizure of new territories they become converted into multi-national, colony-owning states, and thereby come to be an arena for that national and colonial oppression which already exists in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe this period is marked by the awakening and invigoration of subject nations (Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians), which, as a result of the Imperialist War, have led

¹ Stalin has already excepted Ireland (p. 28). By national oppression is meant here economic and political oppression of a whole people, "that system of exploitation and plunder of subject peoples, those measures of forcible restriction of the political rights of subject peoples which are resorted to by imperialist circles." (Stalin, *op. cit.* p. 62.)

to the dissolution of the old bourgeois multi-national states and the formation of new national states enthralled to what are known as the Great Powers.

The *third period* is the Soviet period, the period of the destruction of capitalism and the abolition of national oppression; in which the question of ruling and subject nations, of colonies and mother countries, is being consigned to the archives of history; in which, on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R., we see nationalities which possess equality of rights and equal opportunities for development, but which still preserve a certain historical heritage of inequality owing to their economic, political and cultural backwardness. The substance of this inequality of nationalities consists in the fact that, as a result of historical development, we have received a heritage from the past by virtue of which one nationality, the Great-Russian nationality, is more developed politically and industrially than the other nationalities.

Hence the existence of actual inequality, which cannot be eradicated in one year, but which must be eradicated, and eradicated by economic, political and cultural assistance being rendered to the backward nationalities.

These are the three periods of development of the national problem known to us historically.

The first two periods have one feature in common. It is that in both these periods the nationalities suffered oppression and enslavement, as a result of which the national struggle continued to be fought and the national problem remained unsolved. But there is also a difference between them. It is that in the first period the national problem did not extend beyond the boundaries of the various multi-national states and embraced only a few, mainly European, nationalities; whereas in the second period the national problem became converted from an internal problem of each particular state into a problem mutually affecting several states—into a problem of war between imperialist states waged with the object of retaining the non-sovereign

nationalities under the sway of the latter and of subjugating new nationalities and tribes outside Europe.

Thus the national problem, which was formerly of moment only in the more cultured countries, lost its isolated character in this period and merged with the general problem of the colonies.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 100 (1921).

(3) OPPRESSOR NATIONS

[Lenin constantly repeated that the primary duty of the proletariat of an oppressing nation is to unite with the struggle of those oppressed by its "own" national state (pp. 37, 39). A nation which oppresses others cannot itself be free (pp. 39, 40). In times of war, the ruling classes *deceive the people* into supporting "liberation" for any oppressed nations except those oppressed by themselves (p. 39).

In oppressor countries a section of the working class at home shares in and is corrupted by the exploitation of the small nations included in the "empire" of the oppressor country.

Lenin many times quoted Marx's policy on the *Irish* question as "the greatest example of the attitude which the proletariat of the dominating nations should adopt towards national movements" (*S.W.*, IV, p. 280). He also emphasised Marx's suggestion that after Ireland's separation, federation might follow (p. 39), and with Stalin showed that the right of secession must be the first stage before union (pp. 50-1).]

Having made the acquaintance of Lopatin, Marx . . . expressed a highly flattering opinion of the young Russian Socialist, but added . . . "*Poland* is his weak point. On this point he speaks quite like an Englishman—say an English Chartist of the old school—about Ireland."¹ Marx asks a Socialist belonging to an oppressing nation about his attitude

¹ To Engels, July 5, 1870. Poland, p. 41.

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to the oppressed nation and he at once reveals the defect common to the Socialists of the dominant nations (the British and the Russian): they fail to understand their Socialist duties towards the downtrodden nations, they chew the cud of prejudices, borrowed from the bourgeoisie of the "Great Powers."

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 274 (1914).

Is the *actual* condition of the workers in the oppressing nations the same as that of the oppressed nations from the standpoint of the national problem?

No, they are not the same.

(1) *Economically*, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressing nations receive crumbs of the *super-profits* which the bourgeoisie of the oppressing nations obtain by the extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Moreover, economic data show that a *larger* percentage of the workers of the oppressing nations become "skilled workers" than the workers of the oppressed nations, i.e. a *larger* percentage rise to the position of the *labour aristocracy*. This is a fact. *To a certain degree* the workers of the oppressing nation share with *their* bourgeoisie in the plunder of the workers (and the masses of the population) of the oppressed nations.

(2) *Politically*, the difference is that the workers of the oppressing nations occupy a *privileged* position in many spheres of political life compared with the workers of the oppressed nation.

(3) *Intellectually*, or spiritually, the difference is that the workers of the oppressing nations are taught, at school and in everyday life, to regard the workers of the oppressed nations with disdain and contempt. Every Great Russian, for example, who has been brought up or who has lived among Great Russians has *experienced* this.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 291 (1916).

It was precisely from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle of the English workers that Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland from England, and added: "although after the separation there may come federation."¹ Only by putting forward this demand did Marx really educate the English workers in the spirit of internationalism. Only in this way was he able to oppose the revolutionary solution of a given historical problem to the opportunists and bourgeois reformism, which even now, half a century later, has failed to achieve the Irish "reform." Only in this way was Marx able . . . *also* in the sphere of the solution of national problems, to oppose the revolutionary action of the masses to verbal and often hypocritical recognition of the equality and the self-determination of nations.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 274 (1916).

In the same way that Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland, not for the purpose of splitting England, but for the subsequent free alliance of Ireland with England, not for the sake of "justice for Ireland," but in the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the English proletariat, so we at the present time consider the refusal of the Socialists of Russia to demand freedom of self-determination for the nations, in the sense indicated by us above, a direct betrayal of democracy, internationalism and Socialism.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 289 (1915).

The most widespread deception of the people by the bourgeoisie in the present war consists in hiding its predatory aims under an ideology of "national liberation." The English promise freedom to Belgium, the Germans to Poland, etc. As we have seen, this is in reality a war between the oppressors of the

¹ Nov. 2, 1867, Marx-Engels. *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 228, 278, 280, 288.

majority of the nations of the world for the deepening and widening of such oppression. . . .

Imperialism is the period of an increasing oppression of the nations of the whole world by a handful of "great" nations; the struggle for a Socialist international revolution against imperialism is, therefore, impossible without the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination. "No people oppressing other peoples can be free" (Marx and Engels).¹ No proletariat reconciling itself to the least violation by "its" nation of the rights of other nations can be Socialist.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 235; *L.L.*, 3, p. 25 (1915).

(4) NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL. (POLAND)

[Nationalism is the characteristic feature of bourgeois development, internationalism of proletarian development; Marxists, however, do not "deny" nationalism in the name of the proletarian revolution (pp. 41, 42). Because class content is the most important factor they do not pretend that national independence, territory, traditions, language, character and love of country have no importance (pp. 44, 102).

But in the present epoch of international capitalism, the working class must organise its struggles internationally (p. 43). In this sense, "the working men have no country" (p. 43). Particular national struggles must be subordinated to the interests of the international class struggle, the struggle against imperialism as a whole. Even before the present period, in the epoch of national movements and national wars in Europe, Marx and Engels did not support all national movements, but estimated each according to its class content and value to the international class movement. Their first consideration was always the final aim, the development of the revolutionary proletariat (p. 48), e.g. their attitude to

¹ Engels in *Volksstaat*, 1874, No. 69. This idea had been expressed by them already in 1848 (Part Two, I, IV (1)).

the Czechs, Poland (pp. 44, 47 and Part Two, II (1), (2) IV (1)).

When they treated the *liberation of Poland* as a test question for democrats (above, p. 37) it was because: (1) Poland was in the position of a colony, divided up between three great reactionary Powers, Russia, Prussia and Austria, and her liberation might be the signal for a general rising of the neighbouring border states oppressed by Russia and Austria; (2) a revolutionary war against Russia was the best way of furthering bourgeois-democratic revolution; (3) the position of Prussian Poland was one of the greatest barriers to revolutionary unification and democracy in Germany. Absolutism in Prussia was maintained by alliance with the Tsar; a free Poland supported by Prussia would make that alliance impossible; Prussia must "free herself from within" by freeing Poland from without (Part Two, IV (1)).

Engels in 1851 raised the question of Poland and the agrarian revolution in Russia. In 1852, the question of Poland's frontiers.¹ In 1875, Poland's relation to the proletarian revolution. Marx and Engels came to think Poland of small importance in comparison with the question of the Russian revolution.

The Polish question, repeatedly discussed by Russian and Polish Social-Democrats, 1903-17, brought out the full strength of Lenin's revolutionary theory. (Cf. articles on the national question and self-determination, *S.W.*, IV, V.) Influenced partly by reaction from the intense anti-Russian national chauvinism engendered in Poland by long oppression, and often hindering working-class struggle and unity, Rosa Luxemburg and other Polish Socialists² opposed the Bolshevik programme of Polish self-determination insisted on by Lenin and Stalin, whose slogan for all oppressed nations was right of secession first, union afterwards.

Rosa Luxemburg rejected the struggle for bourgeois

¹ On the frontier question, see *Revolution and Counter-revolution*, p. 56 (*New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852).

² See Lenin, *S.W.*, V (p. 307), and *Notes* (pp. 383-7). The Poles left the Second Party Congress (1903) because the Bolshevik demand for Polish self-determination was adopted.

democracy and national independence, except for "colonial" countries outside Europe. She failed to understand the differing stages of capitalist development, and the character of bourgeois-democratic revolution. Her group's denial of the possibility of national wars in the imperialist epoch, and attitude towards the Irish Rebellion, 1916 (treated as a mere *Putsch* of petty-bourgeois elements),¹ were based on mechanical ideas of proletarian revolution.

Lenin, answering these arguments,² showed the dialectical relation between imperialist war and national uprisings or wars for independence; these were inevitable in colonial countries, and possible also against imperialist Powers in Europe, even after a successful revolution in Russia. He also constantly stressed the *relativity* of national demands (pp. 47, 87) in relation to the class struggle against imperialism as a whole: "The right to self-determination is one of the demands of democracy which must naturally be subordinated to the general interests of democracy" (*S.W.*, IV, p. 274).

After the February revolution, 1917, Lenin and Stalin again insisted (April) on Poland's right to secede, whilst rejecting as "treason to the International" the demand that Russia should at that moment carry on the war against the German occupation of Poland. Bolsheviks would not refuse to wage a revolutionary war, but "the slogan 'down with the frontiers' will become a true slogan only when the Socialist revolution has become a reality, not a method" (*S.W.*, V, p. 311).]

The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of classes and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself

¹ Lenin on the Irish Rebellion, *S.W.*, V, p. 301.

² In "A Caricature of Marxism" (1916) [*S.W.*, V, p. 90]; also, "On the Junius Pamphlet" (see *Labour Monthly*, January and February, 1935]; also, *L.L.*, 20, p. 30.

in a national uniform; the national governments are ~~our~~ ^{our} against the proletariat!

MARX: *The Civil War in France*, p. 62 (1871).

Developing capitalism knows of two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and of national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of all sorts of relations between nations, the breaking down of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, and of economic life in general, of politics, of science and so forth. Both tendencies are the universal law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterises capitalism mature and approaching its transformation into a Socialist society.

LENIN, "Critical Remarks on the National Question."

(Quoted by Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 196.)

The working class could not grow strong, could not become mature and formed, without "constituting itself within the nation," without being "national" ("though not in the bourgeois sense of the word"). But the development of capitalism more and more breaks down national barriers, destroys national seclusion, substitutes class antagonisms for national antagonisms. It is, therefore, perfectly true that in the developed capitalist countries "the working men have no country" and that "united action" of the workers, of the civilised countries at least, "is one of the first conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat." (*The Communist Manifesto*.)

LENIN: *S.W.*, XI, p. 35; *Marx, Engels, Marxism*,
p. 27 (1914).

Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the "labour question." But his theory is as far from ignoring the national question as heaven from earth. . . . Marx writes to Engels about the "Proudhonist clique" in Paris, which "declares nationalities to be an absurdity and attacks Bismarck and Garibaldi, etc. As polemics against chauvinism, their tactics are useful and explainable. But when the believers in Proudhon . . . think that all Europe can and should sit quickly and peacefully on its behind until the gentlemen from France abolish poverty and ignorance . . . they become ridiculous" (June 7, 1866).

"Yesterday," Marx writes on June 20, 1866, "there was a discussion in the International Council on the present war. . . .¹ The discussion wound up, as was to be expected, with the question of 'nationality' in general and the attitude we should take towards it. . . . The representatives of 'Young France' (*non-workers*) came out with the argument that all nationalities and even nations were 'antiquated prejudices' . . . the whole world waits until the French are ripe for a social revolution. . . . The English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friend Lafargue, etc., who had done away with nationalities, had spoken 'French' to us, i.e. a language which nine-tenths of the audience did not understand. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities he appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption into the model French nation."

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 275 (1914).

It is well known that Karl Marx and Frederick Engels considered that the bounden duty of the whole of west European democracy, and still more of Social-Democracy, was to support actively the demand for the independence of

¹ See Part Two, IV (3).

Poland. For the period of the '40's and '60's of last century, the period of the bourgeois revolutions in Austria and Germany, and of the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, this point of view was quite correct and the only consistently democratic and proletarian point of view. As long as the masses of the people in Russia and in most Slavic countries were still fast asleep, as long as *there were no* independent, mass, democratic movements in these countries, the *aristocratic* liberation movement in Poland assumed enormous, paramount importance from the point of view, not only of all-Russian, not only of all-Slavic, but also of all-European democracy.

But while this standpoint of Marx was correct for the '60's, or for the third quarter of the nineteenth century, it ceased to be correct in the twentieth century. Independent democratic movements, and even an independent proletarian movement, have arisen in most Slavic countries, even in one of the most backward Slavic countries, in Russia. [Aristocratic] Poland has disappeared, yielding place to capitalist Poland. Under such circumstances Poland could not but lose its *exceptional* revolutionary importance. . . .

In general the attitude of Marx and Engels to the national question was strictly critical, and they recognised its historical relativity. Thus, Engels wrote to Marx on May 23, 1851, that . . . the importance of Poland was temporary, that it would last only until the agrarian revolution in Russia. . . . "Russia contains more elements of civilisation, education, industry and of the bourgeoisie than the Poles." . . . Engels had no faith in the success of an uprising of the Polish nobles. But all these thoughts, so full of genius and penetration, by no means prevented Engels and Marx from treating the Polish movement with the most profound and ardent sympathy twelve years afterwards, when Russia was still asleep and Poland was seething.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, pp. 271-4 (1914).

Century-long oppression has put [the Poles] in a position where they must either be revolutionary and support every really revolutionary rising of the West as the first step towards the liberation of Poland, or perish. And just now they are in a position in which they can only look for West European allies in the proletarian camps. For the last hundred years they have been continually betrayed by all the bourgeois parties of the West.

It is only since 1848 that the bourgeoisie in Germany counts at all. And from then on it has always been anti-Polish. In France, Napoleon betrayed Poland in 1812; . . . in 1830 and 1846 the bourgeois monarchy followed his example; in 1848 the bourgeois republic; and in the Crimean War and 1863, the Second Empire. Each betrayed Poland as basely as the other. . . . Nowhere except among the revolutionary workers do the Poles find honest and unreserved support, for both have the same interest in the overthrow of the common enemy, and because the liberation of Poland is equivalent to that overthrow.

ENGELS: "On Social Conditions in Russia" (1875).

Marx was in favour of Polish independence in the interests of *European* democracy in its struggle against the power and influence—we may say the omnipotence and predominating reactionary influence—of Tsarism. That this attitude was correct, was most clearly confirmed in practice in 1849, when the Russian serf army crushed the revolutionary-democratic rebellion for national liberation in Hungary.¹ From that time to Marx's death, and even later, until 1890, when there was a danger of Tsarism allied with France waging a reactionary war against *non-imperialist* and nationally independent Germany, Engels stood first and foremost for a struggle against Tsarism.

It was for this, and no other reason, that Marx and Engels

¹ Part Two, II (1).

were opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and Southern Slavs. . . .¹ Marx and Engels drew a definite distinction between "wholly reactionary peoples," serving as "Russian outposts in Europe," and "revolutionary peoples"—namely the Germans, Poles and Magyars. This is a fact. And this fact was *incontrovertibly* indicated *at the time*: in 1848 a revolutionary people [the Magyars], fought for liberty, of which the principal enemy was Tsarism, whereas the Czechs, etc., were really reactionary nations, the outposts of Tsarism.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this *concrete* example, which must be analysed *concretely* if one wishes to be true to Marxism?

Only this: (1) that the interests of the liberation of a number of big and very big nations of Europe are higher than the interests of the movements for liberation of small nations; (2) that the demand for democracy must be applied not isolatedly, but on a European—to-day we should say a world—scale.

That is all. There is not a hint in this of repudiation of the elementary Socialist principle, which the Poles are forgetting,² but to which Marx was *always* true, namely that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.

If . . . a number of nations were to start a Socialist revolution (as the bourgeois-democratic revolution was started in Europe in 1848), and if *other* nations were found to be serving as the main bulwarks of bourgeois reaction—then we would be in favour of a revolutionary war against the latter, in favour of "crushing" them, destroying all their outposts, no matter what small national movements arose. . . .

The various demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, they are a *particle* of the general democratic (at present general Socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, a particle may contradict the whole; if it does, then it must be rejected.

¹ Part Two, II (1), (2).

² See p. 41.

The republican movement in one country may be merely a weapon in the hands of clerical or financial and monarchical intrigue of other countries; if so, we must *not* support this particular concrete movement. But it would be ridiculous on these grounds to delete the slogan of a republic from the programme of international Social-Democracy. . . .

It is the *international* front of proletarian struggle that has changed in relation to the concrete position of the small nations; then (1848–71) the small nations were important as potential allies, either of “Western democracy” and the revolutionary nations, or of Tsarism; now (1898–1914) the small nations have lost that significance; their significance now lies in that they are sources fostering the parasitism and consequently the social imperialism of the “Great Power” nations.

The important thing is not the question as to whether one fifteenth or one hundredth part of the small nations are liberated before the Socialist revolution, but the fact that in the epoch of imperialism, owing to objective causes, the proletariat has been split up into two international camps. . . .¹

Are we opposed to wars and revolution for what is just and beneficial for the proletariat, for democracy and Socialism?

“But we cannot be in favour of a war between the great nations, in favour of slaughtering 20 million people for the problematic liberation of a small nation with a population of perhaps 10 or 20 millions!” No, of course we cannot! Not, however, because we throw out of our programme complete national equality, but because the interests of the democracy of *one* country must be subordinated to the interests of the democracy of *several* and of *all* countries.

LENIN: *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, pp. 146–8, 149 (1916).

¹ Viz. those who collaborate with their own ruling class in “twofold or threefold exploitation of small nations” [colonies] and those who cannot free themselves without freeing small nations.

(5) SMALL NATIONS OR SOVIET REPUBLICS

[The question of small nations has been referred to in the previous section (p. 48) and is further referred to in Sections IV and VI (pp. 94, 123). The present section deals with the sham "independence" of small nations in the present age of international finance capital, illustrated by the position of the border states of the old Russian Empire after the first World War (pp. 52-4).

Bourgeois society is incapable of solving the national problem. After the right of secession, then the solution—federal union—can only follow a Socialist revolution. (Cf. III (3), p. 72: The United States of Europe.) This solution had been outlined before the Russian revolution by Lenin and Stalin. Before the Bolsheviks led the workers to power, Lenin and Stalin (April, 1917) again defined the attitude of the Party to the national question (p. 51).¹ Within the first six months of Soviet power all restrictions based on nationality or religion were removed, the equal rights of all the peoples of Russia declared, full right to secession and independence recognised, whilst every endeavour was made to help revolution (e.g. in Finland).²

The U.S.S.R. to-day is a federal state consisting of twelve Soviet Socialist Republics, each with equal rights, including the right freely to secede. Almost all these republics themselves include a number of autonomous republics and provinces. The largest, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, includes seventeen autonomous republics and six autonomous provinces. National languages and culture, suppressed by Tsardom, have been carefully fostered (p. 55). Lenin and Stalin consistently fought against the tendency of one race to dominate others. See pp. 30, 38, 107 etc. and Stalin, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 157-63, etc.]

Bourgeois nationalists always and everywhere flaunt "general" phrases about a "federation of nations" *in general*

¹ *History of the C.P.S.U.[B.]*, p. 190. Cf. above, p. 42.

² Cf. p. 125. See Lenin, *S.W.*, V, p. 307, VI, p. 243, VII, p. 303, 310.

and about "economic liberty of all nations great and small." But Socialists, unlike the bourgeois nationalists, have always said and now say: rhetoric about "economic liberty of all nations great and small" is disgusting hypocrisy as long as *certain* nations (for example, England and France) invest abroad, that is to say, lend at usurious interest to small and backward nations *scores and scores of billions of francs*, and as long as the small and weak nations are in bondage to them.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 259 (1917).

Although Marx never was in favour of small states, or of splitting up states, or of the federation principle, he considered the secession of an oppressed nation to be a step towards federation; consequently, not towards the splitting of nations, but towards concentration, towards political and economic concentration, concentration on the basis of democracy. . . .

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 285 (1915).

Such a state of affairs sets the proletariat of Russia a two-fold, or rather a two-sided task: first, to fight against all nationalism and, above all, against Great Russian nationalism; to recognise not only complete equality of rights for all nations in general, but also equality of rights as regards state construction, i.e. the right of nations to self-determination, to secession; and second, precisely in the interests of the successful struggle against the nationalism of all nations, in all forms, it sets the task of preserving the unity of the proletarian struggle and of the proletarian organisations, of amalgamating these organisations into an international community, in spite of the bourgeois strivings for national segregation.

Complete equality of rights for all nations; the right of nations to self-determination; the amalgamation of the

workers of all nations—this is the national programme that Marxism, the experience of the whole world, and the experience of Russia, teaches the workers.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 292 (1914).

Thus, our point of view on the national question can be summed up in the following propositions: (a) The recognition of the right of nations to secede; (b) for the nations remaining within the limits of the given state—regional autonomy; (c) for national minorities—special laws guaranteeing their free development; (d) for the proletarians of all nationalities of the given state—a single, indivisible proletarian collective, a single party. . . .

The question of the *right* of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the question of the *obligation* of a nation to secede at any given moment. This latter question must be settled by the Party of the proletariat in each particular case independently, according to circumstances. . . . A people has a right to secede, but it may or may not exercise that right, according to circumstances. Thus we are at liberty to agitate for or against secession, according to the interests of the proletariat, of the proletarian revolution.

STALIN: At the April Conference, 1917. (Quoted in

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 389.)¹

The aim of Socialism is not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small states and all-national isolation, not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them. And in order to achieve this aim, we must, on the one hand, explain to the masses the reactionary nature of the ideas of Renner and Otto Bauer concerning so-called "cultural national autonomy" and on the other

¹ See also *History of the C.P.S.U.[B.]*, p. 190.

hand demand the liberation of the oppressed nations, not only in general, nebulous phrases. . . .

Just as mankind can achieve the abolition of classes only by passing through the transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can achieve the inevitable merging of nations only by passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, i.e. their freedom to secede.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 270 (1916).

In the period of bourgeois revolution in Russia (which began in February, 1917) the national movement in the border regions bore the character of a bourgeois movement of emancipation. The nationalities of Russia, which had for ages been oppressed and exploited by the "old régime," now for the first time felt their strength and hurled themselves into combat with their oppressors. "Abolish national oppression" was the slogan of the movement. In a trice "all-national" institutions sprang up all over the border regions of Russia. The movement was headed by the national, bourgeois-democratic intelligentsia.

"National Councils" in Latvia, the Esthonian Region, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidjan, the Caucasus, Kirghizstan and the Middle Volga Region; the Rada in the Ukraine and in White Russia; the *Sfatul Tari* in Bessarabia; the *Kurultai* in the Crimea and in Bashkiria; the "Autonomous Government" in Turkestan—such were the "national" institutions around which the national bourgeoisie rallied its forces.

It was a question of emancipation from Tsarism, the "basic cause" of national oppression, and the formation of national bourgeois states. The right of nations to self-determination was interpreted to mean the right of the national bourgeoisie in the border regions to take power into its own hands and to take advantage of the February Revolution in order to form

its "own" national state. A further development of the revolution did not and could not come into the calculations of the above-mentioned bourgeois institutions. And the fact was overlooked that Tsarism was being replaced by a naked and barefaced imperialism, that this imperialism was a stronger and more dangerous foe of the nationalities, and the basis of new national oppression.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 68 (1918).

Apart from the fact that the separation of the border regions would undermine the revolutionary might of Central Russia, which is stimulating the movement for the emancipation of the West and the East, the seceded border regions themselves would inevitably fall into bondage to international imperialism. One has only to glance at Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., which have seceded from Russia, but which have retained only the semblance of independence, while in reality they have been converted into unconditional vassals of the Entente; one has only, finally, to recall the recent case of the Ukraine and Azerbaidjan, the former of which was plundered by German capital and the latter by the Entente, in order to realise the counter-revolutionary nature of the demand for the secession of the border regions under present international conditions. When a life-and-death struggle is being waged, and is spreading, between proletarian Russia and the imperialist Entente, only two alternatives confront the border regions:

Either they join forces with Russia, and then the toiling masses of the border regions will be emancipated from imperialist oppression;

Or they join forces with the Entente, and then the yoke of imperialism is inevitable.

There is no third solution. So-called independence of a so-called independent Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., is only an illusion, and conceals the utter dependence of

these apologies for states on one group of imperialists or another.

Of course, the border regions of Russia . . . possess the inalienable right to secede from Russia, and if any of these nations decided by a majority to secede from Russia, as was the case with Finland in 1917, Russia, presumably, would be obliged to record the fact and sanction the secession. But the question here is not of the indubitable rights of nations, but of the interests of the masses of the people both in the centre and in the border regions. . . . And the interests of the masses of the people render the demand for the secession of the border regions at the present stage of the revolution a profoundly counter-revolutionary one.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 79 (1920).

The imperialist War [1914-18] . . . led . . . to the complete disintegration of the defeated former multi-national states (Austria, Hungary, Russia, in 1917) and finally—as the most “radical” solution of the national problem of which the bourgeoisie is capable—to the formation of new bourgeois national states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Finland, Georgia, Armenia, etc.).

But the formation of new independent national states did not result, and could not result, in the peaceful coexistence of nationalities, and did not eliminate, and could not eliminate, either national inequality or national oppression; for the new national states, based as they are on private property and class inequality, cannot exist:

(a) without oppressing their own national minorities (Poland oppresses the Byelo-Russians, Jews, Lithuanians, Ukrainians; Georgia oppresses the Ossets, Abkhazians and Armenians; Yugo-Slavia oppresses the Croats, Bosnians, etc.);

(b) without extending their territories at the expense of their neighbours, which leads to conflict and war (Poland against Lithuania, the Ukraine and Russia; Yugo-Slavia against

Bulgaria; Georgia against Armenia¹ and Turkey, and so on); and

(c) without becoming subject financially, economically and militarily to the "Great" imperialist Powers.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 90 (1921).

Not only has bourgeois society proved incapable of solving the national problem, but in its attempts to "solve" it has inflated it and turned the national problem into a colonial problem, and has created against itself a new front stretching from Ireland to Hindustan.

The only state capable of tackling and solving the national problem is a state based on collective ownership of the means and implements of production—a soviet state.

In the Soviet federal state there are no longer oppressed nationalities or ruling nationalities; national oppression is abolished. But in view of our virtual inequality (cultural, economic and political), inherited from the old bourgeois system, between the more civilised and the less civilised nationalities, the national problem assumes a form which demands the adoption of measures designed to foster the economic, political and cultural progress of the toiling masses of the backward nationalities and to give them the opportunity of catching up with the more advanced Central—proletarian—Russia. From this follow the practical proposals . . . I have submitted.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, p. 106 (1921).

The great international significance of the October Revolution chiefly consists in the fact that:

¹ In 1918 Armenia became a bourgeois republic set up by the Turkish military command and a stronghold of Anglo-French Interventionists and Russian White Guards. Georgia, particular protégé of the British Labour Party, was a Menshevik "Socialist" Republic serving the great capitalist Powers. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaidjan joined the U.S.S.R. in 1920.

(1) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression into the general question of emancipating the oppressed nations, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism.

(2) It has opened up vast possibilities and revealed the proper way of achieving emancipation, and thereby greatly helped the cause of emancipation of the oppressed nations of the West and the East, having drawn them into the common channel of the victorious struggle against imperialism.

(3) *It has thereby erected a bridge between the Socialist West and the enslaved East*, having created a new line of revolutions *against* world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian Revolution, to the oppressed nations of the East.

This, in fact, explains the indescribable enthusiasm which is now being displayed for the Russian proletariat by the toiling and exploited masses of the East and West.

And this largely explains the brutal fury with which the imperialist robbers of the world have hurled themselves against Soviet Russia.

STALIN: *op. cit.*, pp. 76-7 (1918).

III

THE EPOCH OF IMPERIALISM

(1) MONOPOLY CAPITALISM. (2) CRISES. (3) THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.

(1) MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

[In analysing the character of the present age as the *epoch of imperialism*, Lenin showed that because of the development of capitalism to *monopoly capitalism*, this age is one of wars and revolutions; the working class stands on the threshold of power and must face the task of overthrowing its capitalist rulers (p. 61).

The three moving forces at the basis of imperialist world politics are forces of antagonism (1) between exploiters and exploited in each country; (2) between exploiting nations and exploited (colonial) nations; (3) between rival exploiting nations (p. 61). But a fourth contradiction, intensifying the drive to war, has been added in the last twenty-three years by the withdrawal of a sixth of the world from the imperialist system, and the beginning of a new order. As the Socialist state of the U.S.S.R. has gradually, amidst stupendous difficulties, grown strong, this fourth contradiction, between the old world and the new, has begun to dominate the other three (p. 62).]

At a certain stage in the development of exchange, at a certain stage in the growth of large-scale production—namely, at the stage that was reached approximately at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries—commodity exchange had created such an internationalisation of economic relations and such an

internationalisation of capital, accompanied by such a vast increase in large-scale production, that free competition began to be replaced by monopoly. The prevailing types were no longer enterprises freely competing inside the country and through intercourse between countries, but monopoly alliances of *entrepreneurs*, trusts.

The typical ruler of the world became finance capital, a power that is peculiarly mobile and flexible, peculiarly intertwined at home and internationally, peculiarly devoid of individuality and divorced from the immediate processes of production, peculiarly easy to concentrate, a power that has already made peculiarly large strides on the road of concentration, so that literally several hundred billionaires and millionaires hold in their hands the fate of the whole world.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 400 (1915).

Free trade and peaceful competition were possible and necessary as long as capital was in a position to enlarge its colonies without hindrance, and to seize unoccupied land in Africa, etc., as long as the concentration of capital was still slight and no monopolist undertakings, i.e. undertakings of such magnitude as to dominate a *whole* branch of industry, existed. The appearance and growth of such monopolist undertakings . . . make the free competition of former times *impossible*, cut the ground from under its feet, while the division of the world *compels* the capitalists to pass from peaceful expansion to armed struggle for the *re-division* of colonies and spheres of influence.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 186; *L.L.*, 2, p. 24 (1915).

Capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental attributes began to be transformed into their

opposites, when the features of the period of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system began to take shape and reveal themselves all along the line. The fundamental economic factor in this process is the substitution of capitalist monopolies for capitalist free competition.

Free competition is the fundamental attribute of capitalism and of commodity production generally. Monopoly is exactly the opposite of free competition; but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our very eyes, creating large-scale industry and eliminating small industry, replacing large-scale industry by still larger-scale industry, finally leading to such a concentration of production and capital that monopoly has been and is the result: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks manipulating thousands of millions. At the same time monopoly, which has grown out of free competition, does not abolish the latter, but exists alongside it and hovers over it, as it were, and, as a result, gives rise to a number of very acute antagonisms, friction and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of the few big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist combines of manufacturers; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unoccupied by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of the monopolistic possession of the territories of the world which have been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate. . . . And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value

of all definitions, which can never include all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its complete development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will embrace the following five essential features:

(1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a stage that it creates monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.

(2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy.

(3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.

(4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.

(5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist Powers is completed.

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the globe among the great capitalist Powers has been completed.¹

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, pp. 80-1; *L.L.*, 15, pp. 80-1 (1916).

Lenin used to call imperialism "moribund capitalism." Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limits beyond which revolution begins.

Of these contradictions, three are the most important.

The first contradiction is the antagonism between labour and capital. Imperialism denotes the omnipotence of the

¹ Lenin, in this definition, limits himself to "the basic economic factors," dealing later with imperialism as the last stage of capitalism, the epoch of proletarian revolution.

monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and of the financial oligarchy in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions, co-operative organisations, of parliamentary parties and parliamentary struggle—proved quite inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, linger in misery as of old, and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative which imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.

The second contradiction is the antagonism between the various financial groups and the imperialist Powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frantic struggle for exclusive monopoly of these sources, the struggle for redivision of the world that has already been divided, a struggle conducted with particular fury by new financial groups and powers seeking a "place in the sun" against the old ones which tightly cling to their prey.

This frantic struggle between various groups of capitalists is remarkable in that an inevitable element of it is imperialist war—war for the annexation of foreign territory.

This fact in its turn is remarkable in that it leads to the weakening of the imperialists by one another, to the weakening of the position of capital in general: it accelerates the advent of proletarian revolution and makes this revolution a practical necessity.

The third contradiction is the antagonism between the handful of ruling "civilised" nations and the hundreds of millions of colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism means the most shameless exploitation and the most inhuman oppression of hundreds of millions of the population of vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and oppression is to squeeze out super-profits.

But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to construct railways, factories and workshops, and to create industrial and commercial centres. The appearance of the class of proletarians, the rise of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the strengthening of the liberation movement—are all the inevitable results of this “policy.” The strengthening of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception manifestly testify to this fact.

This circumstance is of importance to the proletariat in that it radically undermines the position of capitalism by transforming the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution. . . .

The significance of the imperialist War that broke loose ten years ago (1914) lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single sheaf and threw them on to the scales, thus accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

STALIN: *Leninism*, I, p. 16.

I spoke earlier of the contradictions of world capitalism. But besides these contradictions there is still one more. I mean the contradiction between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R.

True, it is not a contradiction of the internal capitalist type. It is a contradiction between capitalism as a whole and a country building Socialism. But this does not prevent it from decomposing and shaking the very foundations of capitalism. Still more, it lays bare to the very roots all the contradictions of capitalism and gathers them up into one knot, making of them a question of life and death for the capitalism system itself.

Therefore, every time the capitalist contradictions begin to grow acute, the bourgeoisie turns its gaze towards the

U.S.S.R., as if to say: "Cannot we settle this or that contradiction of capitalism, or all the contradictions taken together, at the expense of the U.S.S.R. . . . which by its very existence is revolutionising the working class and the colonies, preventing us from arranging for a new war, preventing us dividing the world anew, preventing us being masters of its extensive internal market, so necessary for capitalists, particularly to-day, owing to the economic crisis? . . ."

But intervention is a two-edged weapon. The bourgeoisie knows this perfectly well. It will be a good thing, they think, if intervention passes off smoothly and finishes up in the defeat of the U.S.S.R. But supposing it finishes in the defeat of the capitalists? There has already been one intervention and that ended in defeat. If the first intervention, when the Bolsheviks were weak, ended in defeat, what guarantee is there that the second will not end in defeat? Everyone sees that the Bolsheviks are far stronger to-day. . . .

Hence the tendency to maintain peaceful relations with the U.S.S.R.

Thus, we have two series of factors and two different tendencies acting in opposite directions. . . . It is the struggle of these two factors that determines the external position of the U.S.S.R.

STALIN: 16th C.P.S.U.[B.] Congress, June, 1930;
Leninism, II, pp. 260-2.

(2) CRISES

[Economic crises are a link between war and revolution. Behind every war is an economic crisis. All capitalist crises are crises of "over-production" (p. 66) and are potentially revolutionary because they express an extreme stage in the contradiction between the abundance of productive forces and the fetters imposed by private monopoly. "Every crisis casts off the conventional, it tears away outer wrappings,

sweeps away the obsolete, and reveals the deeper springs and forces." "The experiences of war, like the experience of every crisis in history, of every great calamity and sudden turn in human life, stun and break some people, but *enlighten and harden others*" (Lenin, *S.W.*, V, pp. 301, 176).

Marx and Engels, who studied economic crises from the time they formed their theory, at first discerned the revolutionary tendency without the counteracting forces and without experience of proletarian mass movements, and expected revolutions to arrive sooner than was possible. They analysed their mistakes.¹ Engels, in another connection, pointed out the error of expressing "an historic tendency, genuine in itself, as an accomplished fact" (to Kautsky, October 14, 1893). Their prime concern was with the development of the working class to higher unity, power and consciousness, through experience of struggle, and they very early (1850) broke with the "Left" Communists, who "treated 'pure will' as the motive power of revolution instead of actual conditions"; "a new revolution is possible only after a new crisis." Equally they opposed fallacies of "increasing misery" or "automatic collapse" of capitalism. Their study of the cyclical crises of their epoch, the period of expanding capitalism, set the example, ever since followed by Marxists, of considering revolutionary tactics in conjunction with economic developments.

Engels lived to see the three phases of the long crisis (1873-87) which signalled for Britain the loss of her monopolies and the epoch of inter-imperialist competition; he recognised this as a new form of crisis and a revolutionary starting-point which would lead to the development of a Socialist movement in Britain (cf. Part Two, II (4)).

¹ Cf. Engels' survey in his Introduction (1895) to *Class Struggles in France*; criticisms are scattered throughout their works, their correspondence with each other and with younger men. Cf. Marx to Engels, February 13, 1863: "The era of revolution has now fairly opened again in Europe [emancipation of the serfs in Russia, Polish insurrection, American Civil War]. And the general position of things is good. But the comfortable delusions and the almost childish enthusiasm with which we hailed the era of revolution before February, 1848, have all gone to hell. . . . We now know what a part stupidity plays in revolutions, and how they are exploited by scoundrels."

Lenin, characterising imperialism as *the epoch of proletarian revolution*, showed that the first World War (1914-18) was the expression of the *general crisis of capitalism*, from which there could not be more than temporary recovery, and which must lead to fresh wars. But in 1927, when capitalism appeared to be fully recovering from the War upheaval, some Marxists looked forward to a new period of peace and capitalist stabilisation, and propounded theories of "organised capitalism" (equivalent to older theories of "peaceful growth" from capitalism to Socialism or of "super-imperialism," p. 73). America was alleged to be an "exceptional" country, impervious to capitalist crisis. Stalin, on the contrary, had already shown that the very improvement in capitalist conditions must be leading to a worse crisis (p. 69). This question, decisive for revolutionary tactics, was discussed (1928) at the 6th World Congress of the Communist International. The greatest world economic crisis in history followed (1929-33); fascism came to power in Germany and the National Government in Britain. In 1934 Stalin analysed a "depression of a special kind" and the onset of a new imperialist war (p. 69). The second Imperialist War began in 1935 with Italy's seizure of Abyssinia, followed (July, 1936, to April, 1939), by the German and Italian invasions of Spain, Japan's invasion of China, Germany's seizure of Austria, Czecho-Slovakia and Memel, Italy's seizure of Albania. In March, 1939 Stalin, at the 18th Congress of the C.P.S.U.[B.], showed that the new economic crisis which had begun in 1937 would be "more severe and more difficult to cope with" than the great crisis of 1929-33, because it had broken out before the previous depression was fully overcome and when war had already begun. He showed also that the crisis first affected Britain, France and the U.S.A. more intensely than it did countries on a war-economy, like Germany, Italy, Japan.¹

The general crisis of capitalism is intensified by the contradiction between the capitalist and Socialist worlds, which, like the epoch of monopoly capitalism itself, forces solutions of a revolutionary character (pp. 61, 68, 69).

¹ See 18th Congress Report, "The Land of Socialism," 1939.

The theory of revolutionary crisis was raised to a higher stage by the experiences of the Bolshevik Party in three revolutions, with Lenin's and Stalin's interpretation of them: "The victory of revolution never comes by itself. It has to be prepared for and won. Only a strong *proletarian party* can prepare for and win victory" (pp. 70-2).]

It is evident that, with no chance of further extending markets, under a system which is obliged to extend production every day, there is *an end to mill-lord ascendancy*. And WHAT NEXT? "Universal ruin and chaos," say the free traders. SOCIAL REVOLUTION AND PROLETARIAN ASCENDANCY, say we.

ENGELS: "The Ten Hours Question," *Democratic Review*,
March, 1850.

Crises were born with the birth of capitalist supremacy. For over a hundred years, periodic economic crises have been taking place, repeated at intervals of twelve, ten, and eight years or less. During this whole period, bourgeois governments of all ranks and colours, bourgeois politicians of all degrees and capacities, have all without exception, tried their hand at "preventing" and "abolishing" crises. They all suffered defeat. They suffered defeat because you cannot abolish or prevent economic crises while remaining within the framework of capitalism.

STALIN: 16th C.P.S.U.[B.] Congress, 1930;
Leninism, II, p. 252.

The basis and cause of economic crises of over-production lie in the very system of capitalist economy. The basis of the crisis lies in the contradiction between the social character of production and the capitalist form of appropriation of the results of production. This basic contradiction of capitalism

is expressed in the contradiction between the colossal *growth* in the productive capacity of capitalism, calculated to secure the *maximum* of capitalist profit and the relative *reduction* of purchasing power of millions of toilers whose standard of living the capitalists are all the time trying to keep within the limits of the lowest possible *minimum*.

In order to win in the game of competition and squeeze out more profits, the capitalists are forced to develop technique, to apply rationalisation, intensify the exploitation of the workers and raise the productive capacity of their undertakings to the extreme limit. In order not to fall behind one another, all the capitalists are obliged, in one way or another, to enter this path of furious development of productive capacities. But the home and foreign markets, the purchasing power of millions of workers and peasants, who, in the last analysis, are the basic purchasers, remains at low level. Hence crises of over-production.

Hence the well-known results, repeated more or less periodically, of commodities remaining unsold, production reduced, unemployment increased, wages lowered, and thereby the contradiction between the level of production and the level of effective demand still further intensified. The crisis of over-production is the expression of this contradiction in unbridled and destructive forms.

If capitalism could adapt production, not to the acquisition of the maximum of profit, but to the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the mass of the people, if it could employ its profits, not in satisfying the whims of the parasitic classes, not in perfecting methods of exploitation, not in exporting capital, but in the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the workers and peasants, then there would be no crisis. But then, also, capitalism would not be capitalism. In order to abolish crises, capitalism must be abolished. . . .

The present economic crisis is developing on the basis of the *general crisis* of capitalism, which began during the period

of the imperialist War, undermined the foundations of capitalism and paved the way for the present economic crisis.

What does this mean?

It means first of all that the imperialist War and its aftermath have intensified the decay of capitalism and disturbed its equilibrium, that we are now living in the epoch of wars and revolutions, that capitalism no longer represents the *sole* and *all-embracing* system of world economy, that side by side with the capitalist system of world economy there exists the Socialist system which is growing, which is flourishing, which is resisting the capitalist system, and which, by the very fact of its existence, is demonstrating the rottenness of capitalism and shaking its foundations.

It means, furthermore, that the imperialist War and the victory of the Revolution in the U.S.S.R. have shaken the foundations of imperialism in the *colonial* and *dependent* countries. That the prestige of imperialism in these countries has already been undermined, that it is no longer capable of governing in the old way in these countries.

It means, further, that during the War and after it, a young native capitalism appeared and grew up in the colonial and dependent countries, which competes successfully in the markets with the old capitalist countries, sharpening and complicating the struggle for markets.

It means, finally, that the War has left to the majority of the capitalist countries a painful heritage in the shape of *chronic under-employment of factories* and *armies of unemployed running into millions*, which, moreover, have been transformed from reserve armies of labour into *permanent* armies of unemployed.

STALIN: *Leninism*, II, pp. 252-5.

As early as the 14th Congress of the C.P.S.U.[B.], 1925, it was stated . . . that capitalism may return to pre-War level,

may surpass the pre-War level, may rationalise its production but that this does not yet mean . . . [that] the stabilisation of capitalism can become durable, that capitalism can recover its pre-War stability.

On the contrary, out of its very stabilisation, out of the fact that production expands, that commerce develops, that technical progress and productive capacity increase, while the world market, the limits of this market and the spheres of influence of individual imperialist groups remain more or less stationary—out of this the deepest and most acute crisis of world capitalism is growing, pregnant with new wars and threatening the existence of any stabilisation.

Out of partial stabilisation an intensification of the crisis of capitalism ensues, the growing crisis disrupts stabilisation—this is the dialectics of the development in the given historical period.

STALIN: 15th C.P.S.U.[B.] Congress, December, 1927.

I have in mind the continuing *general* crisis of capitalism, in the midst of which the *economic* crisis is proceeding: the chronic working of the enterprises under capacity, the chronic mass unemployment, the interweaving of the industrial crisis with the agricultural crisis, the absence of tendencies towards any serious renewal of fixed capital which usually heralds the approach of a boom. . . .

Apparently, what we are now witnessing is the transition from the lowest point of decline of industry, from the lowest depth of the industrial crisis, to a depression; not an ordinary depression, but to a depression of a special kind which does not lead to a new boom and flourishing industry, but which does not force it back to the lowest point of decline. . . .

The intensified struggle for foreign markets, the abolition of the last vestiges of free trade; prohibitive tariffs, trade war, currency war, dumping, and many other analogous measures which demonstrate extreme *nationalism* in economic policy,

have caused the relations between the countries to become extremely acute, have created the soil for military conflicts and have brought war to the front as a means for a new redistribution of the world and spheres of influence in favour of the strongest States. . . . Quite clearly, things are moving to a new war. . . .

Hence the tendency to adventurous assaults . . . and to intervention, a tendency which is bound to be strengthened as a result of the developing economic crisis.

STALIN: 16th C.P.S.U.[B.] Congress, 1930;
Leninism, II, 261.

The fundamental law of revolution, confirmed by every revolution, and particularly by the three Russian revolutions of the twentieth century, is as follows. It is not sufficient for the revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for the revolution it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule as of old. Only when the masses do not want the old régime, and when the rulers are unable to govern them as of old, only then can the revolution succeed. This truth may be expressed in other words—revolution is impossible without an all-national crisis, affecting both the exploited and the exploiter. It follows that for the revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for a revolution, and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; second, that the ruling class be in a state of governmental crisis which attracts even the most backward masses into politics. It is a sign of every real revolution, this rapid ten-fold, or even hundred-fold increase in the number of representatives of the toiling and oppressed masses capable of waging the political struggle, weakens the

government and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly. . . .

With the vanguard alone, victory is impossible. . . . And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions confirmed now with astonishing force and vividness, not only in Russia, but also in Germany.

LENIN: *S.W.*, X, p. 127 and p. 136; *L.L.*, 16, p. 65
and p. 72 (1920).

Comrades, we have now come to the question of the revolutionary crisis as the basis of our revolutionary action. And here we must first of all note two widespread errors. On the one hand, the bourgeois economists depict this crisis simply as "unrest," to use the elegant expression of the English. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that there is absolutely no way out of the crisis.

This is a mistake. There are no such things as absolutely inextricable positions. The bourgeoisie behaves like an arrogant brigand who has lost his head; it commits blunder after blunder, thus making the position more acute and hastening its own doom. All this is true. But it cannot be "proved" that there are absolutely no possibilities whatever for it to lull a certain minority of the exploited with certain concessions, for it to suppress a certain movement or uprising of a certain section of the oppressed and exploited. To try to "prove" beforehand that a position is "absolutely" inextricable would be sheer pedantry, or playing with concepts and catchwords. Practice alone can serve as real "proof" in this and similar questions.

The bourgeois system all over the world is experiencing a great revolutionary crisis. And the revolutionary parties

must now "prove" by their practical deeds that they are sufficiently intelligent and organised, have sufficient contacts with the exploited masses, are sufficiently determined and skilful to utilise this crisis for a successful and victorious revolution.

LENIN: *S.W.*, X, p. 192 (1920).

The more the bourgeoisie becomes entangled in its war combinations, the more frequently it resorts to terroristic methods in the struggle against the working class and the toiling peasantry, the sooner will the revolutionary crisis mature

Some comrades think that as soon as a revolutionary crisis occurs the bourgeoisie must drop into a hopeless position, that its end is predetermined, that the victory of the revolution is assured, and that all they have to do is to wait for the bourgeoisie to fall, and to draw up victorious resolutions. This is a profound mistake.

The victory of revolution never comes by itself. It has to be prepared for and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory. Moments occur when the situation is revolutionary, when the rule of the bourgeoisie is shaken to its very foundations, and yet the victory of the revolution does not come, because there is no revolutionary party of the proletariat sufficiently strong and authoritative to lead the masses and take power. It would be unwise to believe that such cases cannot occur.

STALIN: 17th Congress C.P.S.U.[B.], 1934.

(3) THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

[Lenin, in 1915 and 1916, showed that "uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism" (p. 76). From this he drew a number of conclusions which

strike at the root of every theory of "organised" capitalism, from Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism"¹ to present-day "Federal Union."

On the outbreak of the first World War, 1914-18 (p. 80), the Bolshevik Party, besides the slogan, "Turn imperialist war into civil war," adopted as an immediate political slogan (October, 1914) the formation of a republican United States of Europe, to be achieved by revolutionary overthrow of the German, Austrian and Russian monarchies. Though in this sense "invulnerable" as a political slogan, it was later (August, 1915), rejected, on the basis of Lenin's economic analysis of the law of uneven development.

On the basis of this law, Lenin also analysed the major antagonism between Britain and Germany (pp. 75, 88).

More important still, he overthrew the theory of the Second International that the Socialist Revolution could only take place in highly developed capitalist countries and drew the following conclusions:

The Socialist revolution cannot be victorious in all countries simultaneously.

The victory of Socialism is possible in one country alone.

If one country is victorious, the bourgeoisie of other countries will strive to crush it.

"In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war . . . for Socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie" (p. 77).

In the epoch of monopoly capitalism, the law of uneven development increases the tendency to war between imperialists because relative strength rapidly changes in the course of economic development and equilibrium is only restored by "crises in industry and war in politics" (p. 76).

Redivision (of colonies, etc.) can only be on the basis of strength; peaceful and stable redivision is impossible under capitalism.

¹ See Lenin's *Imperialism*, Chap. IX (*S.W.*, V, p. 108), and *The Collapse of the Second International* (*S.W.*, V, p. 184).

The "United States of Europe" are only possible under Socialism.]

But while the United States of Europe slogan, raised in connection with the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies of Europe, headed by Russia, is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, the important question of its economic content and meaning still remains. From the point of view of the economic conditions of imperialism, i.e. capital exports and the partition of the world among the "progressive" and "civilised" colonial powers, the United States of Europe is either impossible or reactionary under capitalism.

Capital has become international and monopolistic. The world has been divided among a handful of great Powers, i.e. powers successful in the great plunder and oppression of nations. The four Great Powers of Europe, England, France, Russia and Germany, with a population ranging from 250 to 300 millions, with an area of about 7,000,000 square kilometres, possess colonies with a population of almost half a billion (494,500,000), with an area of 64,600,000 square kilometres, i.e. almost half the surface of the globe (133,000,000 square kilometres, not including the Polar region). Add to this the three Asiatic states, China, Turkey and Persia, which are now being torn to pieces by the plunderers who are waging a "war of liberation"—namely, Japan, Russia, England and France. In those three Asiatic states, which may be called semi-colonies (in reality, they are now nine-tenths colonies), there are 360,000,000 inhabitants and their area is . . . (almost one and one-half times the area of the whole of Europe).

Further, England, France and Germany have invested capital abroad to the amount of seven billion pounds. The function of securing a "legitimate" profit from this tidy sum . . . is performed by the national committees of

millionaires called governments, which are equipped with armies and navies and which "place" the sons and brothers of "Mr. Billion" in the colonies and semi-colonies in the capacity of viceroys, consuls, ambassadors, officials of all kinds, priests and other leeches.

This is how, in the epoch of the highest development of capitalism, the plunder of about a billion of the earth's population by a handful of great Powers is organised. No other organisation is possible under capitalism. Give up colonies, "spheres of influence," export of capital? To think this is possible means sinking to the level of a little minister who preaches to the rich every Sunday about the greatness of Christianity and advises them to give to the poor, if not several billions, at least several hundred roubles yearly.

A United States of Europe under capitalism is equivalent to an agreement to divide up the colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis, no other principle of division is possible except force. A billionaire cannot share the "national income" of a capitalist country with anyone except in proportion to the capital invested (with an extra bonus thrown in, so that the largest capital may receive more than its due). Capitalism is private property in the means of production and anarchy of production. To preach a "just" division of income on such a basis is Proudhonism, is stupid philistinism.

Division cannot take place except in "proportion to strength." And strength changes in the course of economic development. After 1871 Germany grew strong three or four times faster than England and France; Japan, about ten times faster than Russia. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real strength of a capitalist state than that of war. War does not contradict the principles of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable development of those principles. Under capitalism the even economic growth of individual enterprises, or individual states, is impossible. Under capitalism, there is nothing else

that periodically restores the disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, *temporary* agreements between capitalists and between the Powers are possible. In this sense, the United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the *European* capitalists. . . . But what for? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing capitalism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty *against* Japan and America, which feel badly treated by the present division of colonies, and which, for the last half century, have grown infinitely faster than backward, monarchical Europe. . . . The times when the cause of democracy and Socialism was associated with Europe alone have gone for ever.

The United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is a state form of national federation and national freedom which we connect with Socialism—until the complete victory of Communism brings about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic state. . . .

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of Socialism is possible, first in a few or even in one single capitalist country.

The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organised its own Socialist production, would *confront* the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts among them against the capitalists, and, in the event of necessity, come out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.

The political form of society in which the proletariat is victorious, in which it has overthrown the bourgeoisie, will be a democratic republic, which will more and more centralise the forces of the proletariat of the given nation, or nations, in the struggle against the states that have not yet gone over to Socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without the dictatorship of the oppressed class, the proletariat. The free federation of nations in Socialism is impossible

without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the Socialist republics against the backward states.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 141 (1915).

The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in the various countries. It cannot be otherwise under the commodity production system. From this it follows irrefutably that Socialism cannot achieve the victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois for some time.

This must not only create friction but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the victorious proletariat of the Socialist countries. In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie.

LENIN: *L.L.*, 20, pp. 30-1 (1916).

The most vivid expression of this tendency at the present time is present-day bourgeois France, the birth-place of that most amiable scheme, "Pan-Europe," the "cradle" of the Kellogg Pact, the most aggressive and militarist country of all aggressive and militarist countries of the world.

STALIN: 16th C.P.S.U.[B.] Congress, 1930;
Leninism, II, p. 261.

The draft Programme [of the Communist International] bases itself on the uneven development of world capitalism, and deduces therefrom the possibility of the victory of Socialism in separate countries, thence leading to the prospect of the creation of two parallel centres of gravity—a world centre of capitalism and a world centre of Socialism—

struggling between themselves for the conquest of the world.

In place of the slogan of a United States of Europe, the draft puts forward the slogan a Federation of Soviet Republics of advanced countries and colonies which have broken away, or are breaking away, from the imperialist economic system and which in their struggle for world Socialism confront the world capitalist system.

STALIN: Speech, July 13, 1928; *Leninism*, II, p. 127.

The bourgeois reformists . . . try to belittle the importance of facts of this kind by arguing that it "would be possible" to obtain raw materials in the open market without a "costly and dangerous" colonial policy. . . . But these arguments are simply an apology for imperialism, an attempt to embellish it, because they ignore the principal feature of modern capitalism: monopoly. Free markets are becoming more and more a thing of the past; monopolist syndicates and trusts are restricting them more and more every day. . . .

Finance capital is not only interested in the already known sources of raw materials; it is also interested in possible sources of raw materials, because present-day technical development is extremely rapid, and because land which is useless to-day may be made fertile to-morrow if new methods are applied (to devise these new methods a big bank can equip a whole expedition of engineers, agricultural experts, etc.), and large amounts of capital are invested. This also applies to prospecting for minerals, to new methods of working up and utilising raw materials, etc., etc. Hence, the inevitable striving of finance capital to extend its economic territory and even its territory in general. . . .

The British capitalists are exerting every effort to develop cotton growing in *their own* Egyptian colony (in 1904, out of 2,300,000 hectares of land under cultivation, 600,000, or more than one-fourth, were devoted to cotton growing); the Russians are doing the same in their colony, Turkestan; and

they are doing so because in this way they will be in a better position to defeat their foreign competitors, to monopolise the sources of raw materials and form a more economical and profitable textile trust in which *all* the processes of production will be "combined" and concentrated in the hands of a single owner.

The necessity of exporting capital also serves to stimulate the quest for colonies, for it is easier in the colonial market (and sometimes it is the only possible way), by monopolist methods to eliminate competition, to make sure of orders, to strengthen the necessary "connections," etc.

The non-economic superstructure which grows up on the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest. "Finance capital does not want liberty, it wants domination," as Hilferding very truly says. LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 76; *L.L.*, 15, pp. 76-7 (1916).

IV

THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 1914-18

(1) CHARACTER OF THE WAR. (2) COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL. (3) THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY.

(1) THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR

["The War of 1914 was a war for the redivision of the world and its spheres of influence. All the imperialist states had long been preparing for it. The imperialists of all countries were responsible for the war.

"But in particular, preparations for this war were made by Germany and Austria, on the one hand, and by France and Great Britain, as well as by Russia, which was dependent on the two latter, on the other. The Triple Entente, an alliance of Great Britain, France and Russia, was formed in 1907. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy formed another imperialist alliance. But, on the outbreak of the War of 1914, Italy left this alliance and later joined the Entente. Germany and Austria-Hungary were supported by Bulgaria and Turkey.

"Germany prepared for the imperialist War with the design of taking away colonies from Great Britain and France, and the Ukraine, Poland, and the Baltic Provinces from Russia. By building the Baghdad Railway, Germany created a menace to Britain's domination in the Near East. Great Britain feared the growth of Germany's naval armaments. Tsarist Russia strove for the partition of Turkey and dreamed of seizing Constantinople and the Straits leading from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean (the Dardanelles). The plans of the Tsarist Government also included the seizure of Galicia, a part of Austria-Hungary.

"Great Britain strove by means of war to smash its dangerous competitor—Germany—whose goods before the

War were steadily driving British goods out of the world markets. In addition, Great Britain intended to seize Mesopotamia and Palestine from Turkey, and to secure a firmer foothold in Egypt.

"The French capitalists strove to take away from Germany the Saar Basin and Alsace-Lorraine, two rich coal and iron regions, the latter of which Germany had seized from France in the War of 1870-1.

"Thus the imperialist War was brought about by profound antagonisms between two groups of capitalist states.

"This rapacious war for the redivision of the world affected the interests of all the imperialist countries, with the result that Japan, the United States and a number of other countries were subsequently drawn into it.

"The War became a world war.

"The bourgeoisie kept the preparations for imperialist war a profound secret from their people. When the War broke out each imperialist government endeavoured to prove that it had not attacked its neighbours, but had been attacked by them. The bourgeoisie deceived the people, concealing the true aims of the War and its imperialist, annexationist character. Each imperialist government declared that it was waging war in defence of its country.

"The opportunists of the Second International helped the bourgeoisie to deceive the people. . . . Far from opposing the War, they assisted in inciting the workers and peasants of the belligerent countries against each other on the plea of defending the fatherland.

"That Russia entered the imperialist War on the side of the Entente (France and Great Britain) was not accidental. . . . Before 1914 the most important branches of Russian industry were in the hands of foreign capitalists, chiefly those of France, Great Britain and Belgium . . . the most important of Russia's metal works were in the hands of French capitalists . . . about 72 per cent. of the metal industry depended on foreign capital. The same was true of the coal industry of the Donetz Basin. Oilfields owned by British and French capital accounted for about half the oil output of the country. A considerable part of the profits of Russian industry flowed

into foreign banks, chiefly British and French. All these circumstances, in addition to the thousands of millions borrowed by the Tsar from France and Britain in loans, chained Tsardom to British and French imperialism and converted Russia into a tributary, a semi-colony of these countries.

"The Russian bourgeoisie went to war with the purpose of improving its position: to seize new markets, to make huge profits on war contracts, and at the same time to crush the revolutionary movement by taking advantage of the War situation . . . the chief mainstay of the Tsar was the feudal landlords" (*History of the C.P.S.U.*[B.], 1935, pp. 162-3).

The Congresses of the Second International at Stuttgart 1907 and Basle 1912 had recognised the oncoming war as an imperialist war and defined the tasks of the workers (p. 90). Lenin had fought the opportunists at these Congresses and played a large part in the drafting of the resolutions. (Cf. *C.W.*, XVIII, 411).¹

It was Lenin's great theoretical work at this time which for the first time gave a full scientific development to Marxism in the epoch of monopoly capitalism. (*United States of Europe Slogan*, 1915; *Imperialism*, 1916; *State and Revolution*, 1917, etc.) From this scientific basis, proving the impossibility of peaceful development or peaceful redivision (p. 75) and the opening of the epoch of proletarian revolution, he drew all the wealth of tactical conclusions with which his war writings are concerned. The importance of differentiating between epochs of history; the sophism of reasonings like Kautsky's, which consisted in "substituting for the present epoch another long past historical epoch"; the question of "aggressors" and "defenders"; "the defence of the fatherland" (p. 101); the roots of opportunism in the Labour movement (p. 91);

¹ Also Lenin on the Stuttgart Congress and the new stages in world politics and working-class development after 1905 (*S.W.* IV, p. 314, *seq.*; also V, pp. 167, 349, *seq.*). For tactics, see below, p. 115. Lenin, in his obituary notice (1913) on Harry Quelch, and in other articles, recalled how Quelch, delegate of the Social Democratic Federation to the Stuttgart Congress, was expelled from Germany for a speech referring to the Hague "Peace" Conference as a "thieves' kitchen."

the ruling-class necessity for increasing "deception of the people," coupled with new attacks upon working-class liberties; the relation between war and peace; the national question and national wars in the imperialist epoch (p. 42); the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, the tasks of the international proletariat in all countries.

All these were considerations from varying angles of the same task: the duty of the working class to work for the defeat of its own government and to strive to "turn imperialist war into civil war."

"A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but desire the defeat of its own government. This is an axiom" (Lenin, *S.W.*, V., p. 421).]

At the head of one of the belligerent groups of nations is the German bourgeoisie. It is fooling the working class and the labouring masses by asserting that it is waging war for the defence of the fatherland, freedom, and civilisation, for the liberation of the peoples that are oppressed by Tsarism, for the destruction of reactionary Tsarism. In reality this very bourgeoisie, which servilely cringes before the Prussian Junkers headed by Wilhelm II, has always been the most faithful ally of Tsarism and the enemy of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants in Russia. In reality, this bourgeoisie will, together with the Junkers, make every effort to support the Tsarist monarchy against a revolution in Russia, no matter what the outcome of the war may be.

In reality, the German bourgeoisie has undertaken a predatory campaign against Serbia with the aim of subjugating it and throttling the national revolution of the Southern Slavs, at the same time directing the bulk of its military forces against the freer countries, Belgium and France, in order to plunder the richer competitor. Spreading the fable that it is waging a defensive war, the German bourgeoisie, in reality, chose the moment that in its opinion was most propitious for

war, and is utilising its latest improvements in military technique and forestalling the new armaments that had already been planned and decided upon by Russia and France.

At the head of the other group of belligerent nations are the English and French bourgeois who fool the working class and the toiling masses by asserting that they are waging a war for the fatherland, freedom and civilisation, against the militarism and despotism of Germany. In reality, this bourgeoisie long ago hired with its billions, and prepared for an attack on Germany, the armies of Russian Tsarism, the most reactionary and barbarous monarchy of Europe.

In reality, the object of the struggle of the English and French bourgeoisie is to seize the German colonies and to ruin a competing nation which is distinguished for its more rapid economic development. And in pursuit of this noble aim the "advanced" democratic nations are helping savage tsarism to strangle Poland, the Ukraine, etc., and to throttle the revolution in Russia more than ever.

Neither of the two groups of belligerent countries lags behind the other in plunder, atrocities and the endless *brutalities of war*. But in order to fool the proletariat and distract its attention from the only real war of liberation, namely, civil war against the bourgeoisie both of "its own" and "foreign" countries, in order to further this lofty aim, the bourgeoisie of each country strives, by means of lying phrases about patriotism, to extol the significance of "its own" national war and to assert that it strives to vanquish the enemy, not for the sake of plundering and seizing lands, but, for the sake of "liberating" all other peoples except its own.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 123 (1914).

The real essence of the present war is the struggle between England, France and Germany for the division of colonies and for the plunder of the competing countries, and the

attempt on the part of Tsarism and the ruling classes of Russia to seize Persia, Mongolia, Turkey in Asia, Constantinople, Galicia, etc. The national element in the Austro-Serbian War occupies an entirely subordinate place and does not alter the general imperialist character of the war.

The whole of the economic and diplomatic history of the last decades proves that both groups of belligerent nations have systematically prepared for precisely such a war. The question as to which group dealt the first military blow or first declared war is of no importance in determining the tactics of the Socialists. Phrases about the defence of the fatherland, resistance to enemy invasion, war of defence, etc., are, on both sides, nothing but a means for the wholesale deception of the people.

At the bottom of the genuinely national wars, particularly such as took place between 1789 and 1871, there was the long process of mass national movements, of struggle against absolutism and feudalism, of overthrowing national oppression and creating states on a national basis as prerequisites for capitalist development.

The national ideology that was created by that epoch left deep traces among the mass of the petty bourgeoisie and a section of the proletariat. Now, in a totally different, imperialist epoch, this is utilised by the sophists of the bourgeoisie, and by the traitors to Socialism who follow in their wake, for the purpose of splitting the workers and diverting them from their class tasks and from the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie.

The words of *The Communist Manifesto*, that "the working men have no country," are truer now than ever. Only the international struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie can preserve its gains and open the road to a better future for the oppressed masses.

"Transform the present imperialist war into civil war"—is the only correct proletarian slogan; it was indicated by the experience of the Commune, was outlined by the Basle

Resolution (1912) and logically follows from all the conditions of an imperialist war among highly developed bourgeois countries. . . .¹

The organisation of the working class at the present time is in a battered condition. Nevertheless, a revolutionary crisis is maturing. After the War, the ruling classes of all countries will exert still greater efforts to throw the proletarian movement for emancipation back many decades. It will be the task of revolutionary Social-Democracy, both in case of a rapid revolutionary development and in case of a protracted crisis, not to renounce prolonged everyday work, not to neglect any of the old methods of class struggle. It will be its task to direct both parliamentarism and the economic struggle against opportunism in the spirit of revolutionary mass struggle.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 132 (1914).

The national element in the present war is represented *only* by the war of Serbia against Austria. Only in Serbia and among the Serbs do we find a national liberation movement of long standing, embracing millions of "national masses," and of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a "continuation." If this war were an isolated one, i.e. if it were not connected with the general European war, with the selfish and predatory aims of England, Russia, etc., it would have been the *duty* of all Socialists to desire the success of the Serbian bourgeoisie—this is the only correct and absolutely inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the national element in the present war. . . .

Further, Marxian dialectics, being the last word in the scientific-evolutionary method, forbid an isolated, i.e. a one-sided and monstrously distorted, examination of an object.

¹ "However difficult such a transformation may appear at any given time, Socialists will never relinquish systematic, persistent, undeviating, preparatory work in this direction, since war has become a fact" (C.C. of the R.S.-D.L.P.; Lenin, *S.W.*, V, p. 130).

The national element of the Serbo-Austrian war has *no* serious significance, and can have none, in the general European war. If Germany wins she will throttle Belgium, another part of Poland, perhaps a part of France, etc. If Russia wins, she will throttle Galicia, another part of Poland, Armenia, etc. If the war ends in a draw, the old national oppression will remain.

For Serbia, i.e. perhaps for one per cent of the participants in the present war, the war is a "continuation of the politics" of the bourgeois liberation movement. For 99 per cent the war is a continuation of the politics of imperialism, i.e. of the decrepit bourgeoisie capable only of raping, not of freeing nations. The Triple Entente, while "liberating" Serbia, is *selling* the interests of Serbian liberty to Italian imperialism in return for the latter's aid in robbing Austria.

All this is common knowledge, and all this is shamelessly distorted by Kautsky for the purpose of justifying the opportunists.

There are no "pure" phenomena, nor can there be, either in nature or in society—this is exactly what Marxian dialectics teach us, for dialectics show that the very concept of purity indicates a certain narrowness, a one-sidedness of human knowledge, that cannot embrace an object in all its totality and complexity.

There is no "pure" capitalism in the world, nor can there be; what we always find are *admixtures* either of feudalism or of the petty bourgeoisie, or of something else. Therefore, for anyone to argue that the war is not "purely" imperialist when we are discussing the flagrant deception of "the masses of the people" that is being perpetrated by the imperialists, who are deliberately screening the aims of naked robbery by "national" phraseology, shows that he is either an infinitely stupid pedant, or a pettifogger and deceiver. . . . The objective content of the war is a "continuation of the politics" of imperialism, i.e. the plunder of foreign nations by the decrepit bourgeoisie of the "Great Powers" (and their

governments), whereas the prevailing "subjective" ideas consists of "national" phraseology that is being spread to fool the masses.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 196; *L.L.*, 2, p. 33 (1915).

The actual policy of the two groups of great capitalist giants—Great Britain and Germany—who, together with their respective allies, have advanced against each other, this policy must be traced back, studied and understood as a whole, for several decades before the War. . . .

By means of long wars, Great Britain, on the basis of her economic forces, the forces of her merchant capital, established her unchallenged sway over the whole world. A new pirate appeared, created in 1871, a new capitalist power, which developed incomparably faster than Great Britain. This is the fundamental fact. . . . The question as to which of these two pirates first drew the knife is not in the least important.

LENIN: see *L.L.*, 20, p. 9 (1917).

(2) THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

[The distinctive development of two tendencies in the labour movement, revolutionary and opportunist, had taken on new phases from 1905 onwards, under the pressure of monopoly capitalism. But in all Western European countries, the dominance of class-collaboration now asserted itself, the workers followed in the wake of their own bourgeoisie, and *opportunism* took the form of *social chauvinism* (pp. 91-3).

Lenin showed that this opportunism was not simply due to individual corruption, but that it had historic roots in the long "peaceful" period of capitalist development, when the workers, whilst gaining experience of democracy and organisation, had forgotten the fundamental basis of the class

struggle, limited themselves to "legal" forms, and, in the case of large, upper sections, had completely identified themselves with the politics of their ruling class. This "bourgeois labour," first developed in Britain, the oldest capitalist country, existed now in all the capitalist countries. A privileged section of the working class, removed from the struggle by good pay, official or parliamentary posts, etc., formed a *bloc* with the exploiting class, against the interests of the vast majority of the workers, whom they controlled.

Lenin's pre-war fight in the Second International was referred to on p. 82; he now called for new and illegal forms of organisation and for a new, revolutionary International.

In Britain mass struggles took place against the worsening of economic conditions (e.g. rent strikes in Scotland) and abrogation of trade union rights (Clyde, South Wales, etc.) and the shop steward movement grew powerful, but these struggles were not raised to a political level as struggles against the war itself.

Lenin singled out John McLean, Scottish schoolteacher and founder of the Scottish Labour College,¹ as a pioneer of revolutionary war resistance, together with Karl Liebknecht.²

In 1916 the British Socialist Party, descendant of the first British "marxist" organisation, the Social Democratic Federation, broke away from the chauvinism of its leader, Hyndman, and took the line of revolutionary internationalism. This Party in 1920 became the most important component part of the Communist Party of Great Britain.]

¹ John McLean (died, 1923) was imprisoned in 1915 and 1916 for sedition, on account of his revolutionary mass work on the Clyde. After fifteen months in prison he was released, 1917, but sentenced, 1918, to five years' after he had openly supported the Bolshevik Revolution. See W. Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde*.

² Karl Liebknecht, murdered January, 1919, with Rosa Luxemburg, was the founder (1907) of the Youth International and pioneer of anti-militarist work; for his book, *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*, he was imprisoned. Except on August 4, 1914, he voted against war credits. In 1915 was one of the founders of the Spartacist League, which became the German Communist Party. May 1, 1916, he organised an anti-war demonstration and was imprisoned till 1918.

For the first time in world history the Socialists of all belligerent countries gathered together, long before the war, and declared that they would utilise it "to hasten the downfall of capitalism" (Stuttgart Resolution, 1907). In other words, they recognised that objective conditions had become ripe for such "hastening of the downfall," i.e. for a Socialist revolution. In other words, they threatened the governments with a revolution. In Basle (1912) they said the same thing more clearly still, referring to the Commune and to October–December, 1905, i.e. to civil war.¹

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 174 (1915).

The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of Socialist opportunism. The latter grew up as a product of the preceding "peaceful" epoch of development of the labour movement.

This epoch taught the working class important methods of struggle, such as utilising parliamentarism and all legal possibilities, it taught it to create mass economic and political organisations, a widespread labour Press, etc.; on the other hand, this epoch created a tendency to repudiate the class struggle and to preach social peace, to repudiate the Socialist revolution, to repudiate the very principle of illegal organisation, to recognise bourgeois patriotism, etc.

Certain strata of the working class (the bureaucracy in the

¹ The Basle Resolution called on the workers (1) to exert every effort to prevent war, and (2) if war broke out "to strive to bring it to a speedy end and to take advantage of the economic and political crisis caused by the war to rouse the masses in order to hasten the downfall of capitalist rule." "The congress calls upon the workers of all countries to oppose to capitalist imperialism the might of the international solidarity of the proletariat. It would be utter blindness or madness for the governments not to understand that the mere thought of a monstrous world war will rouse the indignation and anger of the working class. The proletariat considers it a crime to shoot at each other for the sake of increasing the profits of the capitalists, for the ambitions of dynasties, or for the glory of the secret treaties of diplomacy."

labour movement and the labour aristocracy which received a particle of the profits obtained from the exploitation of the colonies and from the privileged position of their "fatherland" in the world market), as well as petty-bourgeois fellow travellers within the Socialist parties, served as the main social support of these tendencies and the channels of bourgeois influence over the proletariat.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 134 (1915).

By *social-chauvinism* we mean the recognition of the idea of the defence of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, the justification of an alliance between the Socialists and the bourgeoisie and governments of "their own" countries in this War, the refusal to preach and support proletarian-revolutionary action against "one's own" bourgeoisie, etc.

It is perfectly clear that the principal political and ideological content of social-chauvinism fully coincides with the principles of opportunism. It is *one and the same* tendency. Opportunism, in the conditions of the War of 1914-15, engenders social-chauvinism.

The core of opportunism is the idea of class collaboration. The war drives this idea to its logical conclusion, adds to its ordinary factors and stimuli a whole series of extraordinary ones and by special threats and violence compels the unenlightened, disunited masses to co-operate with the bourgeoisie. This naturally widens the circle of adherents of opportunism and it explains sufficiently why the quondam radicals desert to this camp.

Opportunism is the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in other words, the alliance of a section of the workers with the bourgeoisie against the mass of the proletariat.

The war makes such an alliance particularly striking and

compulsory. For decades the source of opportunism lay in the peculiarities of the period in the development of capitalism when the comparatively peaceful and cultured existence of a stratum of privileged workers made them "bourgeois," gave them crumbs from the profits of their own national capital, and isolated them from the sufferings, miseries and revolutionary sentiments of the ruined and impoverished masses.

The imperialist war is the direct continuation and the culmination of this state of affairs, because this is a war for the *privileges* of the Great Power nations, for the re-division of the colonies, for domination over other nations. To defend and to strengthen its privileged position as a petty-bourgeois "higher stratum," or aristocracy (and bureaucracy) of the working class—this is the natural continuation in wartime of the petty-bourgeois opportunist hopes and corresponding tactics, this is the economic foundation of modern social-imperialism.

And, of course, the force of habit, the routine of relatively "peaceful" evolution, national prejudices, fear of sharp changes and lack of faith in them—these were additional circumstances that strengthened both opportunism and hypocritical and cowardly reconciliation with opportunism, ostensibly only for a while, ostensibly only because of unusual causes and motives. The war has modified opportunism which had been nurtured for decades; it has raised it to a higher plane; it has increased the number and the variety of its shadings; it has augmented the ranks of its adherents; it has enriched their arguments by a host of new sophisms; it has merged, so to speak, many new streams and rivulets with the main stream of opportunism, but the main stream has not disappeared. Quite the contrary.

Social-chauvinism is opportunism ripened to such a degree that the existence of this bourgeois abscess inside the Socialist parties as it has existed *hitherto* has become impossible.

Those who refuse to see the very intimate and indissoluble

connection that exists between social-chauvinism and opportunism snatch at individual "cases"—this or that opportunist, they say, has become an internationalist, this or that radical has become a chauvinist. But this is a positively frivolous argument, as far as the development of *trends* is concerned.

First, the economic foundation of chauvinism and opportunism in the labour movement is the same; it is an alliance between a numerically small upper stratum of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie who enjoy crumbs of the privileges of "their" national capital, against the masses of the proletarians, the masses of the toilers and the oppressed in general. Secondly, the political and ideological content of both trends is the same. Thirdly, taken as a whole, the old division of Socialists into an opportunist and a revolutionary wing, that was characteristic of the period of the Second International (1889-1914) *corresponds* to the new division into chauvinists and internationalists.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, pp. 203-6;

L.L., 2, pp. 39-41 (1915).

While the chauvinist and Kautskyan German Social-Democracy refrained from establishing a free Press for itself during the two years of war, and has servilely borne the yoke of military censorship (only the Left radical elements, to their honour be it said, published pamphlets and manifestoes, in spite of the censorship)¹—an oppressed, civilised

¹ On the cowardice of the German Social-Democrats, Lenin remarks: "Incidentally, it would not have been necessary to close *all* Social-Democratic papers in reply to the government's ban on writing about class hatred and class struggle. To agree not to write about this, as *Vorwärts* did, was mean and cowardly. *Vorwärts* died *politically* when it did this . . . It was, however, possible to retain the legal papers by declaring that they were non-Party and *non-Social-Democratic*, and served the technical needs of a section of the workers, i.e. that they were *non-political papers*. Underground Social-Democratic literature containing an *estimation* of the war, and legally published labour literature without such an estimation, a literature that does not say what is not true, but keeps silent about the truth—why should this not have been possible? (*S.W.*, V, 202 n.)

nation replied to a military oppression unparalleled in its ferocity, by establishing an organ of revolutionary protest!¹

The dialectics of history is such that small nations, powerless as an *independent* factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the *real* power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the Socialist proletariat.

The General Staffs in the present war assiduously strive to utilise all national and revolutionary movements in the camp of their enemy: the Germans utilise the Irish Rebellion, the French—the Czech movement, etc. From their standpoint they are acting quite properly. A serious war would not be treated seriously if advantage were not taken of the slightest weakness of the enemy, if every opportunity that presented itself were not seized, the more so since it is impossible to know beforehand at what moment, where and with what force a powder magazine will “explode.” We would be very poor revolutionaries if, in the great proletarian war for emancipation and Socialism, we did not know how to utilise *every* popular movement against *each separate* disaster caused by imperialism in order to sharpen and extend the crisis.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 305 (1916).

An instructive picture. People are so degraded and dulled by bourgeois legality that they cannot even *conceive* of the need for *other* organisations, *illegal* organisations for the purpose of leading the revolutionary struggle. So low have people fallen that they imagine that legal unions existing with the permission of the police are the limits beyond which it is impossible to go—as if the *preservation* of such unions as *leading* organisations could be conceived of in periods of crisis! This is a striking example of the dialectics of opportunism: the mere growth of legal unions, the mere habit of stupid but

¹ Belgium, *Le Socialisme*.

conscientious philistines of confining themselves to book-keeping, creates a situation where, at a time of crisis, these conscientious petty bourgeois prove to be traitors, betrayers, *stranglers* of the revolutionary energy of the masses. And this is no accident. It is necessary to proceed to the building of a revolutionary organisation—this is demanded by the changed historical situation, it is demanded by the epoch of proletarian revolutionary action. But it is possible to proceed in this direction only *over the heads* of the old leaders, the stranglers of revolutionary energy, *over the heads* of the old Party, by *destroying* it.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 214; *L.L.*, 2, p. 48 (1915).

McLean and Liebknecht—these are names of Socialists who put the idea of revolutionary struggle against imperialism into life.

LENIN: June 17, 1917.

Notwithstanding desperate persecution by the bourgeoisie and notwithstanding the suppression of free speech and Press, there has become outlined in every country during the War a trend of revolutionary internationalism. This trend has remained faithful to Socialism. It has not allowed it to be covered up by lying phrases about defence of the fatherland. . . .

To this trend belong, for instance, McLean in England, who was sentenced to eighteen months' hard labour for his struggle against the predatory English bourgeoisie, Karl Liebknecht in Germany, who was sentenced to hard labour by the German imperialist robbers for the crime of advocating a revolution in Germany and exposing the predatory character of the War on the German side. To this trend belong also the Bolsheviks in Russia, who are being persecuted by the agents of Russian Republican and democratic

imperialism for the same "crime" for which McLean and Karl Liebknecht are being persecuted.

LENIN: September 8, 1917.

Liebknecht in Germany, Adler in Austria, McLean in England—these are the best-known names of those individual heroes who took upon themselves the difficult role of fore-runners of the world revolution.

A second stage in the historic preparation for this revolution was a broad mass ferment, which assumed the form of a split in the official parties, the form of illegal publications and of street demonstrations. The protest against the War grew—and the number of victims of governmental persecutions also grew. The prisons of countries famed for their lawfulness and even for their freedom, Germany, France, Italy, England, began to be filled with scores and hundreds of internationalists, opponents of the War, advocates of a workers' revolution.

LENIN: October 20, 1917.¹

(3) THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY

[The Bolsheviks were the only party in the Second International which carried out the policy of the Basle Resolution (p. 90). From the first they declared that the defeat of Tsarist Russia, "the Government that is oppressing the greatest number of nations," would be the least evil of the victories possible in the robber war. They refused to vote for war credits.

Their Press, with its great paper, *Pravda*, was destroyed, trade unions were closed, most leading comrades were imprisoned or exiled, but the work was carried on, whilst at the same time Lenin did everything possible to influence

¹ The three passages above are quoted from translations in *Lenin on Britain*.

other sections of the International and to show the real character of the Imperialist War. His great theoretical works belonging to this period have been mentioned (p. 82).

Even in the bitterest hours of defeat and oppression, the Bolsheviks continued their preparatory work for revolution.]

Under present conditions, it is impossible to determine, from the standpoint of the international proletariat, whether the defeat of one or the other group of belligerent nations is the lesser evil for Socialism. For us Russian Social-Democrats, however, there cannot be the slightest doubt that, from the standpoint of the working class and of the toiling masses of all nations of Russia, the lesser evil would be the defeat of the Tsarist monarchy, of the most reactionary and barbarous government that is oppressing the greatest number of nations and the largest mass of the population of Europe and Asia.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 129 (1914).

The first steps towards transforming the present imperialist War into civil war are: (1) absolute refusal to vote for war credits and resignation from bourgeois Cabinets; (2) complete rupture with the policy of "national peace" (*bloc nationale, Burgfrieden*); (3) creation of an illegal organisation wherever the governments and the bourgeoisie abolish constitutional liberties by introducing war emergency laws; (4) support of fraternisation among the soldiers of the belligerent nations in the trenches and in the theatre of war in general; (5) support of every kind of revolutionary proletarian mass action in general.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 134 (1915).

But the more zealously the governments and the bourgeoisie of all countries strive to disunite the workers and to pit them against one another, the more ferociously they

employ the system of martial law and military censorship (which even now, in time of war, are applied more strictly against the "enemy within" than against the enemy without) for this lofty purpose, the more urgent is the duty of the class conscious proletariat to defend its class solidarity, its internationalism, its Socialist convictions against the orgy of chauvinism roused by the "patriotic" bourgeois cliques of all countries. To renounce this task would mean the renunciation by the class conscious workers of all their strivings towards freedom and democracy, not to speak of Socialism.

It must be stated with a feeling of deepest chagrin that the Socialist parties of the leading European countries have not fulfilled this duty. . . . Our party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, has suffered, and will yet suffer, great losses in connection with the War.

Our legal labour Press has been completely destroyed. The majority of the labour unions have been closed, a large number of our comrades have been imprisoned and exiled. But our parliamentary representatives—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour fraction in the State Duma—considered it to be its imperative Socialist duty to refrain from voting for the war credits and even to walk out of the Duma, in order more energetically to express its protest; it considered it its duty to brand the policy of the European governments as an imperialist one. And notwithstanding the fact that the oppression of the Tsar's Government has increased tenfold, our comrades, the workers in Russia, are already publishing their first illegal manifestoes against the war and are thus doing their duty towards a democracy and the International.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 125 (1914).

To strengthen, to develop, to widen, to sharpen mass revolutionary action; to create underground organisations without which it is impossible even in "free" countries to tell the truth to the masses—this is the whole practical programme

which Social-Democracy should adopt in this War. All the rest is either lies or phrases, no matter with what opportunist or pacifist theories it embellishes itself.

LENIN: *Opportunism and the Collapse of the Second International* (1916).

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is. . . .

The Socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything else* than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it—without such participation, *mass* struggle is *impossible*, without it *no* revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors.

But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts (hated by all, though for different reasons) and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of Socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately "purge" itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, pp. 303, 304 (1916).

The defeat of Russia *has turned out* to be the lesser evil, for it has advanced the revolutionary crisis on a vast scale and has aroused millions, tens and hundreds of millions. And in the

conditions of an imperialist war, a revolutionary crisis in Russia could not but lead people's thoughts to the only salvation of the people, to the idea of "a revolt in the rear" of the German Army, i.e. to the idea of civil war in all the belligerent countries.

Life teaches. Life is *marching*, through the defeat of Russia, to a revolution in Russia, and through that revolution, and in connection with it, to civil war in Europe. Life has taken this direction and the Party of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia, drawing new strength from these lessons of life, which have justified its position, will, with still greater energy, pursue the path it has set out to follow.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 153 (1915).

V

THE DEFENCE OF THE FATHERLAND

["Marxism arrives at the recognition of defence of the fatherland, for example, in the wars of the Great French Revolution and the Garibaldi wars in Europe, and at the repudiation of defence of the fatherland in the imperialist War of 1914-18, from the analysis of the specific historic circumstances of each separate war, and not from some 'general principle' or some separate item of a programme" (Lenin, *S.W.*, V, p. 273).

"The workers have no country" does not mean, as has already been shown in previous sections, that according to Marxists a worker should not love his country, home, language, soil and traditions (p. 102). But the question in the present age is how to avoid being further enslaved and betrayed by the deception used in ruling-class exploitation of such sentiments, and how to possess the country whose wealth depends on the workers.

Distinctions between "aggressors" and "defenders" are a delusion in imperialist war (p. 105). Further, a "defensive" war of any kind may be fought by "offensive" military operations (pp. 105, 106). In some cases Socialists demand "aggressive wars" (pp. 47, 103).

The character of the war is determined by the *class* waging it and the politics of which it is a continuation (pp. 9, 104).

The Bolsheviks and the workers led by them to victory showed their "national pride" (p. 106) by working for the overthrow of their own tyrannic Government. The workers grow strong within a "nation" (p. 108), which is the growth of a particular epoch; we to-day are approaching a different epoch (p. 108). For false ideas of "revolutionary national defencism," see Part Two, IV, 4; Lenin, *S.W.*, VI, 52, 94, 526; *L.L.*, 5, p. 17; *L.L.*, 20, p. 18. True defencism, p. 107 below.]

On the question of what the Social-Democrats are to do in the event of a declaration of war, the majority of the German Social-Democrats—with Bebel and Vollmar at their head—persistently maintain that Social-Democrats must defend their fatherland from attacks, that they are in duty bound to take part in a “defensive” war. This postulate led Vollmar to declare in Stuttgart that “all our love for humanity cannot prevent us from being good Germans. . . .”

The other extreme is represented by the small group of followers of Hervé. The Hervéists argue that the proletariat has no fatherland. Hence, all wars are waged in the interests of the capitalists; hence, the proletariat must fight against every kind of war. . . .¹

First of all, a few remarks about patriotism. That the “proletarians have no fatherland” is actually stated in *The Communist Manifesto*; that the position of Vollmar, Noske and Co. is a “flagrant violation” of this fundamental proposition of *international* socialism is equally true.

But it does not follow from this that Hervé and the Hervéists are right when they assert that it is immaterial to the proletariat in which fatherland it lives: whether it lives in monarchist Germany, republican France or despotic Turkey. The fatherland, i.e. the given political, cultural and social environment, is the most powerful factor in the class struggle of the proletariat, and if Vollmar is wrong in establishing a kind of “truly German” attitude of the proletariat towards the “fatherland,” Hervé is not less wrong in treating such an important factor of the proletarian struggle for emancipation in an unpardonably uncritical fashion. The proletariat cannot treat the political, social and cultural conditions of its struggle with indifference or equanimity, consequently, it cannot remain indifferent to the destiny of its country. But it is interested in the destiny of its country only *in so far* as it affects its class struggle, and

¹ The Hervéists and their theory of a strike against war, p. 117.

not by virtue of some bourgeois "patriotism" which sounds altogether indecent on the lips of a Social-Democrat.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 326 (1908).

Perhaps the most primitive theory is the "instigator" theory, which runs as follows: We have been attacked, we are defending ourselves; in the interests of the proletariat the disturbers of the peace of Europe must be repulsed. This is a repetition of the declarations of all the governments and of the declamations of the whole bourgeois and yellow Press the world over. Plekhanov has managed to embellish even this threadbare vulgarity with the Jesuitical reference to "dialectics" to which this writer always resorts; he asserts that in order to be able to appraise the concrete situation, it is necessary first of all to find the instigator and punish him and to postpone all other questions until the situation changes.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 178; *L.L.*, 2, p. 16 (1915).

Not less opportunistic is the conviction . . . that it is the duty of Social-Democrats to take part in a defensive war. . . . Sometimes, especially in a moment of patriotic intoxication, it is utterly impossible to be clear as to whether the given war was called forth by defensive or offensive aims. . . . Social-Democrats would be entangled in the meshes of diplomatic negotiations if they took it into their heads to determine their attitude towards war on the basis of such a criterion. Social-Democrats may even find themselves in the position of having to demand aggressive wars.

In 1848 Marx and Engels considered a war on the part of Germany against Russia to be necessary. Later on they attempted to influence public opinion in England in order to induce England to go to war on Russia.¹

¹ Part Two, I, II.

Obviously, in this question (as also in views on "patriotism") it is not the offensive or defensive character of the war, but the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat, or rather, the interests of the international movement of the proletariat that represent the only possible point of view from which the question of the attitude of Social-Democracy towards a given phenomenon in international relations can be considered and solved.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 331 (1908).

If a German under Wilhelm or a Frenchman under Clemenceau says: "As a Socialist, I have the right and it is my duty to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy," he argues, not like a Socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a *petty bourgeois nationalist*. Because this argument leaves out of account the revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital, it leaves out of account the appraisal of the war as a *whole* from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat—that is, it leaves out internationalism, and all that remains is a miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. . . .

The Socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist argues differently. He says: "The character of the war (whether reactionary or revolutionary) is not determined by who the aggressor was or whose territory the 'enemy' has occupied; it is determined by the *class* that is waging the war and the politics of which this war is a continuation."

LENIN: *S.W.*, VII, pp. 176-7;

L.L., 18, pp. 65-6 (1918).

Before the overthrow of feudalism, absolutism and foreign oppression, there could be no thought of developing the

proletarian struggle for Socialism. When, in speaking of the war of such periods [1789-1871], the Socialists always recognised the justice of a "defensive" war, they had in view the above aims—namely, a revolution against mediævalism and serf labour. Under a "defensive" war, the Socialists always understood a "just" war in this particular sense. (Wilhelm Liebknecht once expressed himself in this very way.)

Only in this sense did the Socialists recognise and do recognise at present, the legitimacy, progressivism and justice of "defending the fatherland" or of a "defensive" war. For instance, if Morocco were to declare war against France to-morrow, or India against England, or Persia or China against Russia, etc., those wars would be "just," "defensive" wars, no matter which one was the first to attack. Every Socialist would then wish the victory of the oppressed, dependent, non-sovereign states against the oppressing, slave-holding, pillaging "great" nations.

But imagine that a slave-holder possessing 100 slaves wages war against a slave-holder possessing 200 slaves for a more "equitable" re-distribution of slaves. It is evident that to apply to such a case the term "defensive" war or "defence of the fatherland" would be an historical lie; in practice it would mean that the crafty slave-holders were plainly deceiving the unenlightened masses, the lower strata of the city population. It is in this very fashion that the present-day imperialist bourgeoisie, when war is waged among the slave-holders for the strengthening and consolidation of slavery, deceive the peoples by means of the "national" ideology and the idea of defence of the fatherland.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, pp. 220-1;

L.L., 3, pp. 10-11 (1915).

Kugelman confuses a defensive war with defensive military operations. So if a fellow falls upon me in the street,

I may only parry his blow, but not knock him down, because then I should turn into an *aggressor*! The want of dialectic comes out in every word these people utter.

MARX to Engels, August 17, 1870.

A defensive war does, of course, not exclude offensive operations dictated by military events.

MARX: *The Civil War in France, 1871.*

Are we enlightened Great Russian proletarians impervious to the feeling of national pride? Certainly not!

We love our language and our motherland; we, more than any other group, are working to raise its labouring masses (i.e. nine-tenths of its population) to the level of intelligent democrats and Socialists. We more than anybody are grieved to see and feel to what violence, oppression and mockery our beautiful motherland is being subjected by the Tsarist hangmen, the nobles and the capitalists. We are proud of the fact that those acts of violence met with resistance in our midst, in the midst of the Great Russians. . . . We are filled with national pride because of the knowledge that the Great Russian nation, too, has created a revolutionary class; that it, too, has proven capable of giving humanity great examples of struggle for freedom and for Socialism; that its contribution is not confined solely to great pogroms, numerous scaffolds, torture chambers, great famine, and great servility before the priests, the Tsars, the landowners and the capitalists.

We are filled with national pride, and therefore we *particularly* hate *our* slavish past (in which the noble landowners led the *mujiks* into war to stifle the freedom of Hungary, Poland, Persia, China) and our slavish present, in which the same landowners aided by the capitalists, lead us into war to stifle Poland and the Ukraine to throttle the democratic movement in Persia and in China, to strengthen

the gang of Romanovs, Bobrinskys, Purishkeviches that covers with shame our Great Russian national dignity.

It is nobody's fault if he is born a slave. But a slave who is not only alien to the struggle for his freedom but also justifies and eulogises his slavery (for instance, by calling the throttling of Poland, the Ukraine, etc., a "defence of the fatherland" of the Great Russians) such a slave is a knave and a scoundrel who arouses a just feeling of indignation, contempt and loathing. . . .

We Great Russian workers, filled with national pride, wish by all means to have a free and independent, sovereign, democratic, republican, proud Great Russia, which is to maintain in relation to her neighbours the humane principle of equality and not the serf principles of privileges that humiliate a great nation.

It is because we wish it so that we say: it is impossible to "defend the fatherland" in the twentieth century in Europe, even if it be Far Eastern Europe, otherwise than by fighting with all revolutionary means against the monarchy, the landowners and the capitalists of *our* fatherland, i.e. against the *worst* enemies of our fatherland.

It is impossible for the Great Russians to "defend the fatherland" otherwise than by wishing defeat for Tsarism in every war, this being the lesser evil for nine-tenths of the population of Great Russia, since Tsarism not only oppresses these nine-tenths of the population economically and politically, but it also demoralises, degrades, defiles and prostitutes them by developing in them the habit of oppressing other peoples, by teaching them to cover up their shame with hypocritical, quasi-patriotic phrases.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, pp. 100-1 (1914).

We, who since October, 1917, have become defencists, who have recognised the principle of defence of the fatherland, we all know that we have broken with imperialism, not in words,

but in deeds; we destroyed the secret treaties, vanquished the bourgeoisie in our own country and propose an open honourable peace so that all the nations might see what our intentions are.

LENIN: *S.W.*, VII, p. 293 (1918).

It is necessary that the working class first "constitute itself as the nation," says *The Communist Manifesto*, thereby indicating the *limits* and *conditions* for a recognition of nation and fatherland as necessary forms of the bourgeois order and consequently also of the bourgeois fatherland. The opportunists distort this truth when they apply to the final stage of capitalism that which was true in relation to budding capitalism. Of this final stage of capitalism and of the tasks of the proletariat in its struggle to destroy, not feudalism, but capitalism, Karl Marx says clearly and definitely, "the workers have no fatherland."

It is obvious why the opportunists are afraid to recognise this truth of Socialism, why, in most cases, they are even afraid openly to debate it. The Socialist movement cannot be victorious within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new, higher forms of human life under which the best demands and progressive tendencies of the labouring masses of all nationalities will be fully satisfied in an international unity while the present national partitions are destroyed.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 87 (1914).

VI

WAR AND PEACE

- (1) ARMIES AND THE PEOPLE. (2) ANTI-MILITARISM.
(3) PEACE TERMS.

(1) ARMIES AND THE PEOPLE

[Special bodies of armed men are an essential part of the State, which is itself the executive committee and organ of force of the ruling class. In primitive societies everyone bears arms, but as class society develops, possession of arms and control of arms production are increasingly monopolised by the ruling class and its representative, the State. "A self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the cleavage of societies into classes."¹ Standing armies, police and bureaucratic institutions ("ministries," staffed by "civil servants") are a necessary part of the monopoly-capitalist State.

The character of military organisation depends on the stage of industrial development, which is itself influenced by military needs. The Birmingham workers who produced most of the muskets used in the Crimean War (1854-6) and 730,000 rifles for the American Civil War (1861-4) made them (by a highly sub-divided labour process) in their homes or in small workshops; the Franco-Prussian War was the first war of factory-produced rifles; steel and armour plating began to revolutionise naval warfare in the 60's and 70's; the light machine gun, handy for small bodies of troops in rough country, arrived to aid colonial conquest in the 80's; air forces, submarines, mechanised land units, ferro-concrete fortifications and poison gas are twentieth-century weapons.

The intensified rivalries of the great Powers in the epoch of imperialism increases the competitive growth of armaments. Arms production, the most lucrative branch of heavy industry,

¹ Engels, *Origin of the Family* (IX). Lenin, *State and Revolution*, II (2).

becomes a national and international force and itself acts as an incentive to war ("war," said Lenin, is terribly profitable").

Larger and larger sections of the industrial population are drawn into the armed forces and the arms industry under the direct dictatorship of the capitalist state: increasing numbers learn the use of weapons; existing class divisions are reproduced within the army.

The training of the people in the use of arms has been the aim of Marxists since 1848. Engels thoroughly studied military history and strategy; his anonymous writings on the American Civil War were attributed to an American general (Scott); on the Austro-Italian question (*Po and Rhine*) to a Prussian staff officer; as the military correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, at that time the London club-man's evening paper, he wrote sixty articles on the Franco-Prussian War.¹ He made a special study of volunteer and militia organisations and of guerrilla and street fighting.²

In the period of Western European democratic revolutions and wars, Marx and Engels adapted the popular demand for the abolition of standing armies (the instruments of absolutism) and arming of the people; the British trade union leaders who in 1866 supported the resolution of the First International³ were carrying on Radical and Chartist tradition.

¹ During the Austro-Prussian War, 1866 (Part Two, IV (2)), he contributed five military articles to the *Manchester Guardian* (June 20 to July 6).

² E.g. his pamphlet, *Essays addressed to Volunteers* (London, 1861), including articles written for the *Volunteer Journal for Lancashire and Cheshire* 1859-60; he also wrote on the "English Riflemen's Movement" for the *Allgemeine Militärzeitung* (Darmstadt). He made a detailed analysis of the revolutionary campaign in Germany, 1848, in which he fought, and of the fighting in Paris (June, 1848), and detailed studies of all aspects of the Crimean War (Part Two, II (3)).

³ In favour of general arming and instruction in use of weapons, retention, temporarily of small standing armies as schools for officers; every man capable of bearing arms to serve a short time in such armies. It was opposed on pacifist lines by the first Secretary of the General Council, Randall Cremer (1838-1908), one of the founders of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (now the A.S.W.), but not by his colleagues, who after the Congress did not re-elect him as Secretary. He resigned, founded a pacifist organisation, was knighted and given the Nobel Peace Prize (1903).

Engels and Lenin opposed bourgeois militias as substitutes for regular army service. In 1863, when Bismarck introduced universal military service in Prussia, Engels urged the German workers not to support the middle-class opposition (Part Two, IV (3)). After the Franco-Prussian War had ended hopes of revolutionary unification in Germany (Part Two, IV (4)) and the Paris Commune had given the example of the first proletarian dictatorship,¹ Marx and Engels drew new conclusions. The Commune had shown that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes." The "bureaucratic and military machine" cannot be transferred from one hand to another; it must be "smashed." Just as the expansion of capitalism does not produce peaceful transformation into Socialism, so the capitalist state army, however much extended, cannot peacefully change into a people's army. Marxists resist the extension of the imperialist state war machine; they organise the struggle for peace and against imperialist war, by every means possible. They vote against war credits, etc., but do not refuse military service (p. 120).]

Is our theory that the *organisation of labour is determined by the means of production* anywhere more brilliantly confirmed than in the human slaughter industry?²

MARX to Engels, July 7, 1866.

¹ "The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army and the substitution for it of the armed people" (Marx, *Civil War in France*).

² "The *history of the army* brings out more clearly than anything else the correctness of our conception of the connection between the productive forces and social relations. In general the army is important for economic development. For instance, it was in the army that the ancients first developed a complete wages-system. . . . So also the gild-system among the corporation of *fabri* [smiths]. Here too the first use of machinery on a large scale. Even the special value of metals and their use of money appears to have been originally based . . . on their military significance. The division of labour *within* one branch was also first carried out in the army. The whole history of the forms of bourgeois society is very strikingly epitomised here" (Marx to Engels, September 25, 1857).

One institution of the British Army suffices to characterise the class from which the British soldier is recruited: we refer to the punishment of flogging. . . .

How can it be explained that the cat-o'-nine-tails has triumphantly weathered all the storms of half a century? Very easily. It is the instrument by means of which the aristocratic character of the English army is maintained and all the higher grades from that of ensign upwards remain reserved for the younger sons of the aristocracy and gentry. To abolish the cat-o'-nine-tails would be to abolish the extraordinary gulf between privates and officers which splits the army into two entirely different races. . . .

ENGELS: *Neue Oder Zeitung*, August 31, 1855.
Gesammelte Schriften, 1917, II, p. 351.¹

From the moment warfare became a branch of large-scale industry (ironclad ships, rifled artillery, quick-firing and repeating cannons, repeating rifles, steel-covered bullets, smokeless powder, etc.), large-scale industry, without which all these things cannot be made, became a political necessity (for Russia). All these things cannot be had without a highly developed metal manufacture. And that manufacture cannot be had without a corresponding development in all other branches of manufacture, especially textile.

ENGELS: *Selected Correspondence*, p. 497
 (September 22, 1892).

¹ Flogging, which had been abolished in the Prussian Army when Engels had performed his service there and had not existed in the French Army since the Revolution, was not abolished in the British Army until 1881. When the article quoted was written, a soldier at Aldershot had recently died under a flogging. By 1865, the number of offences punished by flogging had increased. Floggings 1863-5: 518, 528, 441. The Radical, Bradlaugh, played a great part in the abolition. The entrance examination system for officers, which slightly modified the old exclusive nomination system, was only introduced after the Franchise Act of 1867. Cf. Part Two, (1).

Force is no mere act of the will, but requires very real preliminary conditions before it can come into operation—that is to say, *instruments*, the more perfect of which vanquish the less perfect; moreover, these instruments have to be produced, which also implies that the producer of more perfect instruments of force, *vulgo* arms, vanquishes the producer of the less perfect instrument, and that, in a word, the triumph of force is based on the production of arms, and this in turn on production in general—therefore, on “economic power,” on the “economic order,” on the *material* means which force has at its disposal.

Force, nowadays, is the army and navy, and both, as we all know to our cost, are “devilishly expensive.” Force, however, cannot make any money; . . . money must be provided through the medium of economic production; and so in yet another way force is conditioned by the economic order, which furnishes resources for the equipment in maintenance of the instruments of force.

But even that is not all. Nothing is more dependent on economic pre-conditions than the army and navy. Their armaments, composition, organisation, tactics and strategy depend above all on the stage reached at the time in production and communications. It is not the “free creations of the mind” of generals of genius which have revolutionised war, but the invention of better weapons and changes in the human material, the soldiers; at the very most, the part played by generals of genius is limited to adapting methods of fighting to the new weapons and combatants. . . .

The army has become the main purpose of the State and an end in itself; the peoples are only there in addition in order to provide and feed the soldiers. Militarism dominates and is swallowing Europe. But this militarism also carries in itself the seed of its own destruction. Competition of the individual states with each other forces them, on the one hand, to spend more money each year on the army and navy, artillery, etc., thus more and more hastening forward

financial catastrophe; and on the other hand, to take universal compulsory military service, more and more seriously, thus in the long run making the whole people familiar with the use of arms; and therefore making the people more and more able at a given moment to make its will prevail in opposition to the commanding military lords.

And this moment comes as soon as the mass of the people—town and country workers and peasants—has a will. . . . What the bourgeois democracy of 1848 could not accomplish, just because it was *bourgeois* and not proletarian—namely, to give the labouring masses a will whose content was in accord with their class position—Socialism will infallibly secure. And this means the bursting asunder of militarism *from within*, and with it of all standing armies. . . .

Only a revolution such as the French, which brought about the economic emancipation of the burghers and especially of the peasantry could find the method of the mass army and at the same time the free forms of movement which shattered the old rigid lines—the military counterparts of the absolutism against which they were fighting. And we have seen in case after case how advances of technique, as soon as they became usable in the military sphere and in fact were so used, immediately and almost forcibly produced changes in the methods of warfare and indeed revolutionised them, often even against the will of the army command. And nowadays any zealous subaltern could explain to Herr Dühring how greatly the conduct of a war depends on the productivity and means of communication of the armies' own hinterland¹ as well as of the arena of war. In short, always and everywhere it is the economic conditions and instruments of force which help "force" to victory and without these force ceases to be force.

ENGELS: *Anti-Dühring*, pp. 189–90, 194–5.

¹ Cf. Stalin, July 13, 1928 (*Leninism*, II, p. 123): "It is impossible to fight for imperialism unless the imperialist rear is strengthened. The imperialist rear cannot be strengthened without suppressing the workers. That is what fascism is for."

"The growing international interlocking of the cliques of finance capital," this is the only really general and undoubted tendency, not during the last few years, and not in two countries, but in the whole world, in the whole of capitalism. But why must this tendency lead to disarmament, and not to armaments, as hitherto?

Take any one of the world-famous producers of cannon (and of armaments in general), for instance, Armstrong. The English *Economist* recently (May 1, 1915) published figures showing that the *profits* of this firm rose from £606,000 in 1905-6, to £856,000 in 1913, and to £940,000 in 1914. The interlocking of finance capital is here very pronounced and it continues to grow: German capitalists "hold shares" in the business of an English firm; English firms build submarines for Austria, etc. Internationally interlocked capital is doing splendid business in armaments and wars. To deduce any economic tendency towards disarmament from the combining and interlocking of various national capitals into one international whole means putting well-intentioned philistine desires for the blunting of class antagonisms in place of the actual sharpening of these antagonisms.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 188.

(2) ANTI-MILITARISM

[The attitude of Marxists to anti-militarism is guided by their conception of war as a continuation of politics, and therefore of the class struggle, by other means. Marxists cannot be pacifists, for they support revolutionary wars, etc. (pp. 47, 77) and are prepared to sacrifice their lives in them. Their attitude to the voting of war credits and military service was referred to above (pp. 110, 111). They do not adopt individual forms of resistance or sabotage; their aim is mass agitation (see *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 74).

They disagree with the anarchist slogan of a "strike against

war," for reasons given by Lenin when this matter was discussed at the Stuttgart Congress in 1907; the mistake lay in separating the fight against war from the fight against capitalism (p. 117). Lenin equally opposed the Right Social-Democrats who conducted no anti-militarist propaganda or activity, on the excuse that war was part of capitalism and would last as long as capitalism; this was bound up with their failure to recognise the character of the State as the organ of the ruling class (pp. 118, 119). For the general attitude of Marxists, see p. 120.]

The Socialists have always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous and bestial. Our attitude towards war, however, differs in principle from that of the bourgeois pacifists and anarchists. We differ from the first in that we understand the inseparable connection between wars on the one hand and class struggles inside of a country on the other, we understand the impossibility of eliminating wars without eliminating classes and creating Socialism, and in that we fully recognise the justice, the progressivism and the necessity of civil wars, i.e. wars of an oppressed class against the oppressor, of slaves against the slave-holders, of serfs against the landowners, of wage-workers against the bourgeoisie.

We Marxists differ both from pacifists and anarchists in that we recognise the necessity of an historical study of each war individually, from the point of view of Marx's dialectical materialism. There have been many wars in history which, notwithstanding all the horrors, cruelties, miseries and tortures, inevitably connected with every war, had a progressive character, i.e. they served the development of mankind, aiding in the destruction of extremely pernicious and reactionary institutions (as, for instance, absolutism or serfdom), or helping to remove the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (that of Turkey or Russia). It is therefore necessary to examine the historic characteristics of the present war taken by itself.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 219; *L.L.*, (1915).

The war is not an accident, not a "sin," as is the idea of the Christian ministers (who preach patriotism, humanitarianism and peace no less eloquently than the opportunists); it is an inevitable stage of capitalism; it is a form of *capitalist* life as natural as peace. . . .

The idea of refusing to serve in the army, of strikes against the war, etc., is mere foolishness; it is the miserable and cowardly dream of an unarmed struggle against an armed bourgeoisie; it is a weak yearning for the abolition of capitalism without a desperate civil war, or a series of wars.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 88 (1914).

Hervé forgets the cause and effect as between capitalism and war; if the proletariat had adopted Hervé's tactics it would have condemned itself to futile work: it would have used all its fighting preparedness (he talks of insurrection, does he not?) to fight the consequences (war), while allowing the cause (capitalism) to continue.

The anarchist method of reasoning is revealed here in full measure. The blind faith in the miraculous power of every "*action directe*," the abstraction of this "direct action" from the general social and political situation without analysing it in the least. . . .

Hervé's plan is "very simple": on the day of the declaration of war the Socialist soldiers desert, and the reservists declare a strike and stay at home.

But "a reservists' strike is not passive resistance: the working class would soon pass on to open resistance, to insurrection, and this latter would have more chances of success, because the active army would be on the frontier of the country" (G. Hervé, *Leur Patrie*).

Such is this "effective, direct and practical plan," and, certain of its success, Hervé proposes to reply to every declaration of war by a military strike and insurrection.

As is clearly seen from the above, the question here is not whether the proletariat should, when it deems it expedient, reply to a declaration of war by a strike and insurrection. The controversy centres round the question as to whether the proletariat should be bound by an obligation to reply to *every* war by insurrection. To adopt the latter policy means depriving the proletariat of the choice of the moment for the decisive battle and leaving that choice to its enemies. It is not the proletariat that is to choose the moment of struggle in accordance with its own interests, when its general socialist class consciousness is at its height, when it is well organised, when the ground is favourable, etc., etc.; no, the bourgeois governments could provoke it to an uprising even when the conditions were unfavourable for it, e.g. by a declaration of such a war as is specially capable of calling forth patriotic and chauvinist sentiments among broad strata of the population; a war that would isolate the rebellious proletariat. . . .

Kautsky is right when he says of Hervé's idea: "The idea of a strike against war was prompted by 'good' motives, it is noble and heroic, but it is heroic folly."

The proletariat may reply to the declaration of war by a military strike if it finds it expedient and appropriate; it may, among other methods of achieving the social revolution, resort also to a military strike; but it is not in the interests of the proletariat to bind itself down to this "tactical recipe."

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 328 (1908).

But while the views of the Hervéists are "heroic folly," the position of Vollmar, Noske and their adherents of the "Right wing" is, on the other hand, opportunist cowardice. Since militarism is the offspring of capital and will fall with it—they argued in Stuttgart, and especially in Essen—there is no need for special anti-militarist agitation: no such agitation should be carried on.

LENIN: *S.W.*, IV, p. 329 (1908).

The opportunists long ago prepared the ground for this collapse by rejecting the Socialist revolution and substituting for it bourgeois reformism, by repudiating the class struggle with its inevitable transformation into civil war at certain moments, and by preaching class collaboration, by confining themselves in their struggle against militarism to a sentimental, philistine point of view instead of recognising the need for a revolutionary war of the proletarians of all countries against the bourgeoisie of all countries, by converting the necessary utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois legality into a fetish and into forgetfulness of the need for illegal forms of organisation and agitation in times of crises.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 128 (1914).

Whether we should perish between slave-holders, ourselves blind and helpless slaves, or whether we should perish for the "attempts at fraternisation" between the workers, with the aim of casting off slavery? Such, *in reality*, is the "practical question."

LENIN: *The Civil War Slogan Illustrated*, March, 1915.

Take the modern army. It is one of the good examples of organisation. This organisation is good only because it is *flexible* and is able at the same time to give to millions of people *a single will*. To-day these millions are living in their homes in various parts of the country; to-morrow a call for mobilisation is issued, and they gather at the appointed centres. To-day they lie in the trenches, sometimes for months at a stretch; to-morrow they are led to the attack in another formation. To-day they perform miracles hiding from bullets and shrapnel; to-morrow they perform miracles in open combat. To-day their forward detachments place mines under the ground; to-morrow they move forward scores of

miles, according to the advice of flyers above ground. When, in the pursuit of one aim, animated by one will, millions change the forms of their intercourse and their actions, change the place and the method of their activities, change their tools and weapons in accordance with changing conditions and the requirements of the struggle—this is organisation.

The same holds true for the working-class struggle against the bourgeoisie. To-day there is no revolutionary situation, the conditions that cause ferment among the masses or heighten their activities do not exist; to-day you are given a ballot paper—take it. Learn how to organise in order to be able to use it as a weapon against your enemies and not as a means of getting soft parliamentary jobs for men who cling to their seats in fear of having to go to prison.

To-morrow, you are deprived of the ballot paper, you are given a rifle and a splendid quick-firing gun constructed according to the last word of engineering technique—take this weapon of death and destruction, do not listen to the sentimental whiners who are afraid of war. Much has been left in the world that *must* be destroyed by fire and iron in order that the emancipation of the working class may be achieved. And if anger and desperation grow among the masses, if a revolutionary situation arises, prepare to create new organisations and *utilise* these useful weapons of death and destruction *against your* government and *your* bourgeoisie.

This is not easy, to be sure. It will demand difficult preparatory activities. It will demand grave sacrifices. This is a *new* form of organisation and struggle that *one also has to learn*, and one never learns without making mistakes and suffering defeats. The relation this form of class struggle has to participation in elections is the same as the relation the storming of a fortress has to manœuvring, marching, or lying in trenches.

History places this form of struggle on the order of the day *very infrequently*, but its significance and its consequences are felt for decades. The days when *such* methods can and must

be put on the programme of struggle are equal to *scores of years* of other historical epochs.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 214 (1915).

(3) PEACE TERMS

[This section shows some of the deceptions relating to peace terms. The quotation pp. 123-6 is from Lenin's report to the C.P.S.U.[B.] Party Congress immediately after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March, 1918) at one of the darkest hours of the Revolution.]

A mass sentiment for peace often expresses the beginning of a process, an indignation and a consciousness of the reactionary nature of the war. It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to take advantage of this sentiment. They will take the most ardent part in every movement and in every demonstration made on this basis, but they will not deceive the people by assuming that in the absence of a revolutionary movement it is possible to have peace without annexations, without the oppression of nations, without robbery, without planting the seed of new wars among the present governments and the ruling classes. Such deception would only play into the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent countries and their counter-revolutionary plans. Whoever wishes a durable and democratic peace must be for civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie.

LENIN: *C.W.*, XVIII, p. 235 (1915).

The approach of peace, or at least the intense discussion of the question of peace by certain bourgeois elements, not accidentally, but inevitably gave rise to a particularly marked

divergence between the two policies. Bourgeois pacifists and their "Socialist" imitators, or followers, have always pictured, and now picture, peace as being something in principle distinct from war, for the pacifists of both shades have never understood that "war is the continuation of the politics of peace and peace is the continuation of the politics of war." Neither the bourgeoisie nor the social-chauvinists wanted, nor do they wish to see that the imperialist War of 1914-17 is the continuation of the imperialist politics of 1898-1914, if not of an earlier period. Neither the bourgeois pacifists nor the Socialist pacifists see that if the bourgeois governments are not overthrown by revolution peace *now* can only be an imperialist peace, a continuation of the imperialist War.

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 262 (1917).

Kautsky, in his articles, "argues" with great thoroughness that Constantinople must not be given to Russia and that Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone. . . .

"Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone. . . ." If I say no more than that, I create the impression that I stand for the complete freedom of Turkey. As a matter of fact, I am only repeating a phrase that is usually uttered by German diplomats who are *deliberately* lying and deceiving, who employ this phrase in order to conceal the *fact* that Germany *has already* converted Turkey into her financial and military vassal! And if I am a German Socialist, my "general" phrases are extremely *useful* to German diplomacy, for their real significance lies in that they put German imperialism in a *good light*.

"... All countries must renounce all thought of annexations . . . of the economic subjection of any people whatsoever. . . ." What magnanimity! The imperialists "renounce the thought" of annexations and of the financial strangulation of weak nations a thousand times, but should we not compare these renunciations with the *facts* which show that any one of

the big banks of Germany, England, France and of the United States *do hold* small nations "*in subjection*"? Can the bourgeois government of a wealthy country *really* renounce annexations and the economic subjugation of alien peoples when billions and billions have been invested in the railways and other enterprises of weak nations?

Who really fights against annexations, etc.? Is it those who utter magnanimous phrases, the objective significance of which is the same as that of the Christian holy water that is sprinkled on the crowned and capitalist pirates? Or is it those who explain to the workers that it is impossible to put an end to annexations and financial strangulation without overthrowing the imperialist bourgeoisie and its governments?

LENIN: *S.W.*, V, p. 251 (1917).

The peculiar relations which have been established between the victorious countries and Germany might be depicted in the form of a pyramid, on the peak of which America, France, Britain, etc., are seated in lordly attitudes, with the Young Plan in their hands inscribed "Pay!" while below Germany lies flattened out at the end of its resources, and forced to devote its last energies to carrying out the order to pay the milliards of indemnities. Would you like to know what this is called? It is called the "Spirit of Locarno." To imagine that such a situation can pass without any consequences for world capitalism means to understand nothing at all of real life.

STALIN: Report to the 16th Congress C.P.S.U.[B.] (1930);
Leninism, II, p. 317.

Since the European revolution has been delayed, severe defeats await us because we lack an army, because we lack organisation, because, at the moment, we cannot solve these two problems.

If you are not able to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl through the mud on your belly, you are not a revolutionary, but a chatterbox; and I propose this, not because I like it, but because we have no other road, because history has not turned out to be so pleasant as to make the revolution ripen everywhere simultaneously. . . .

A period has set in of severe defeats, inflicted by imperialism armed to the teeth, upon a country which has demobilised its army, which had to demobilise. The thing I foretold has come to pass; instead of the Brest-Litovsk Peace we have received a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests upon those who refused to accept the former peace. . . .¹

I leave it to others to dream of the international revolution in the field, that it will come. Everything will come in due time; but for the time being, set to work to create self-discipline, obey, come what may, so that we can have exemplary order, so that the workers may learn to fight for at least one hour in twenty-four. This is much more difficult than writing beautiful fairy tales. This is the position to-day; by that you will help the German revolution, the international revolution.

The last war has been a bitter, painful, but serious lesson for the Russian people. It taught them to organise, to become disciplined, to obey, to create a discipline that will be exemplary discipline. Learn discipline from the Germans; if we do not, we, as a people, are doomed, we shall live in eternal slavery.

This is the way history has proceeded and no other way. History suggests that peace is a respite for another war, war is a method of obtaining a somewhat better or somewhat worse peace. At Brest the relation of forces corresponded to

¹ Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov had a prolonged fight on the peace question against Trotsky, Bukharin and others. Trotsky (February 2, 1918) violated the instructions of the Bolshevik Party and refused to sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Under the final treaty, Poland, the Ukraine and the Baltic States were taken by Germany.

a peace dictated by the victor, but it was not a humiliating peace. The relation of forces at Pskov corresponded to a disgraceful, more humiliating peace; and in Petrograd and Moscow, at the next stage, a peace four times more humiliating will be dictated to us. . . .

Let the Russian people understand that they must become disciplined and organised and then they will be able to withstand all the Tilsit peace treaties.¹ The whole history of wars for liberation shows that when these wars embraced large masses liberation came very quickly. We say: Since history marches forward in this way we will have to abandon peace for war, and this may happen within the next few days. . . .

We do not know how long the respite will last—we will try to take advantage of the situation. Perhaps the respite will be a long one, perhaps it will only last a few days. . . . I repeat that at a moment when the army is obviously sick, when we are taking advantage of every moment, come what may, to get at least one day's respite, we say that every serious revolutionary who has contacts with the masses and who knows what war is, what the masses are, must discipline the masses, must heal them, must try to rouse them for a new war—every such revolutionary will admit that we are right, will admit that we were right in signing any disgraceful peace because it is in the interests of the proletarian revolution and the regeneration of Russia, because it will help to get rid of the sick limb.

As every sensible man will understand, by signing this peace treaty we do not put a stop to our workers' revolution; everyone will understand that by concluding peace with the Germans we do not stop rendering military aid; we are sending arms to the Finns, but not military units which prove to be unfit. . . .

We must learn to work on a new path. That is much more

¹ The Treaty of Tilsit, imposed by Napoleon on Prussia in 1807. Prussia lost half her territory, but arose again and reconquered it in 1814-15.

difficult, but it is by no means hopeless. It will not break the Soviet power if we do not break it ourselves by senseless gambling. . . .

We should have but one slogan—seriously learn the art of war, put the railways in order. To wage a Socialist revolutionary war without railways would be the most sinister treachery. We must create order and we must create the whole of that energy and the whole of that might which all that is best in the revolution will create.

Take advantage even of an hour's respite if it is given you, in order to maintain contact with the remote rear and there create new armies. Abandon illusions for which life has punished you and will punish you more severely in the future. An epoch of severe defeats is looming up before us, it has set in, we must be able to reckon with it, we must be prepared for persistent work in conditions of illegality, in conditions of downright slavery to the Germans; it is no use glossing this over; it is really a Peace of Tilsit. If we are able to act in this way, then, in spite of defeat, we shall be able to say with absolute certainty, "Victory will be ours."

LENIN: *S.W.*, VII, pp. 297-304 (1918).

The only class that can lead the toilers and the exploited masses is the class that unswervingly marches along its path without losing courage and without dropping into despair even at the most difficult, severe and dangerous crossings. Fits of hysteria are of no use to us. What we need is the steady march of the iron battalions of the proletariat.

LENIN: *S.W.*, VII, p. 350 (1918).

THE END

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